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SOME ASPECTS

of

KERALA AND TAMIL LITERATURE

PART I

Lectures delivered under the auspices
of the University in
1945—46

by

RAO SAHIB M. RAGHAVA AIYANGAR,
Professor of Tamil, University of Travancore

Translated into English
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PREFACE

As Research Professor under the Sir Rm. Alagappa Chettiar Endowment, I delivered a course of lectures during 1945—46 under the auspices of the University on some aspects of Kerala life and culture as embodied in Tamil literature. As much new ground was covered and many fresh points of view set out, the suggestion was made that the lectures might be collected in book form. Accordingly, I have put them down in writing. In the course of writing out the lectures, their original form has undergone some incidental changes.

In the hope that the book might reach a wider circle of readers, I had it rendered into English under my supervision. To Sri R. Seshadri Aiyangar, B. A., B. L., Sri R. Veerabhadran, M. A., L. T., and Sri N. S. Rajagopalan, I render thanks for valuable help in the preparation of the manuscript.

I cannot adequately express my feelings of gratitude to Sachivottama Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, our former Vice-Chancellor, who presided over my first lecture on Kanthalur Salai and gave me words of encouragement. Sri A. Gopala Menon, a senior historian and retired Director of Public Instruction of Travancore, presided over other lectures. Mr. H. C. Papworth, the present Vice-Chancellor, gave me all facilities. They have thus placed me under a deep debt of gratitude.

Trivandrum,
29—9—1948

M. Raghava Aiyangar.

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SECTION I

THE KERALA COUNTRY.

1. Kerala—A Part of the "Sen-Tamil Land."

Sen-Tamil and Kodum-Tamil Lands.

In the history of any language dialects rise and fall, but its basic character is shaped by the accredited standard speech of a particular area and particular section of the people. The history of a language, as commonly understood, is thus largely the history of the standard speech of that language.[1] The question, therefore, of determining the area in which the standard speech of a language is or was spoken, assumes paramount importance in linguistic study.

It is a matter of common knowledge that the origins of Kerala history are dovetailed into the history of the Tamil country. During the Sangam age and probably even later, the Chera country was inseparable from the *Tamilagam* or Tamil-speaking region. An enquiry as to whether the Chera country also formed part of the area of Tamil standard speech will therefore form a pertinent part of early Kerala history.

The standard speech in Tamil is known in old literature as *Sen-Tamil* and the other dialects have, by contrast, been called *Kodum-Tamil* The Tolkappiyam, the oldest grammar of the language, divides words into four classes: *iyarchol* (native words), *tirichol* (literary or unusual words), *tisaicchol* (foreign or loan words)

1 In English, it is well known that the ancestor of the present-day standard speech is the West Saxon dialect.

and *vadachol* (Sanskrit words). *Iyarchol* is defined as "words agreeing with usage in the Sen-Tamil land and whose sense does not undergo change."[2] *Tisaicchol* is defined in a crucial sutra, which may be tentatively translated as follows: "The name given to words borrowed from the twelve countries adjoining the Sen Tamil land."[*]

The majority of the commentators on the Tolkappiyam have given the above interpretation to the Sutra, thus assuming without question, the existence of a separate Sen-Tamil area. This land constituted, according to them, "the territory north of the river Vaigai, south of the river Marudam, east of Karuvur and west of Maruvur." Areas not included in this territory are christened *Kodum Tamil* lands. Twelve of these are also enumerated.[3]

Location of en-Tamil Area North of Vaigai (Madura) Untenable.

The Sen-Tamil and Kodum-Tamil lands above described are not borne out by any passage of Tolkappiyanar or his known contemporaries. This ancient grammar mentions twelve divisions of *Tamilagam*, without detailing them. *Panambaranar*, a colleague and contemporary of Tolkappiyanar, who contributed a prefatory verse to the grammar, tells us

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2 Tolkappiyam, *Collathikaram*, *Eccchavial*—Sutra 398.
"செந்தமிழ் நிலத்து வழக்கொடு சிவணித்
தம்பொருள் வழாஅமை இசைக்குஞ் சொல்லே."

* *Ibid*—Sutra 400.
"செந்தமிழ் சேர்ந்த பன்னிரு நிலத்துந்
தங்குறிப் பினவே திசைச்சொற் கிளவி."

3 These are: *Potungarnadu*, *Olinadu*, *Thenpandinadu*, *Kuttanadu*, *Kudanadu*, *Panrinadu*, *Karkanadu*, *Cidanadu*, *Pulinadu*, *Malainadu*, *Aruvanadu*, and *Aruvavadathalainadu*. As alternatives to the first two nadus, *Venadu* and *Punanadu* are also cited. cf. the well-known stanza.
தென்பாண்டி குட்டம் குடங் கற்கா வேண் பூழி
பன்றி யருவா அதன்வடக்கு—நன்றாய
சீத மலாடு புனனாடு செந்தமிழ்சேர்
ஏதமில் பன்னிருநாட் டெண்.

that 'the land of *Good Tamil* is the area between the Venkata hill in the north and the Kumari in the south.'[4] The author of the Tolkappiyam corroborates this, and speaks only of the lands of the glorious three—the Chera, Chola and Pandya—as one compact area.[5]

Most probably, the epithet *Kodu(mai)* in Kodum-Tamil (meaning 'crooked') was directly coined by the commentators in antithesis to *Sem(mai)* (meaning 'straight') in the compound word, Sen Tamil, used by Tolkappiyanar.

That the classifications of the commentators did not obtain in the age of the Tolkappiyam is enforced by tradition too. This grammar, so report goes, was composed during the period of the first Sangam and formed an authoritative classic for the second and third Sangams. Tradition has it that a deluge washed away the capital towns of the first and second Sangams, and it stands to reason that references to the standard Tamil area by Tolkappiyanar and Panambaranar (of the period of the second Sangam) should be confined to territory of the first and second Sangams only.[6] It is erroneous on the face of it to place the standard speech in an area far north of the capital towns of *Kavatapuram* and Southern Madura (of the second Sangam), or to suppose that the master-minds of the first two Sangams carried on their studies in an unrecognized dialectal region.

The nature of the territory bounded by the river Marudam[7] in the north, and Vaigai in the south, Maruvur[8] in the east and Karuvur in the west, is

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4. Panambaranar's Payiram:
"வடவேங்கடந் தென்குமரி யாயிடைத் தமிழ் கூறு நல்லுலகத்து"

5 "வண்புகழ் மூவர் தண்பொழில் வரைப்பு" (தொல். செய். 79)

6. Vide- *Irayanar Kalaviyal Urai*—Preface.

7. *Marudam* is an undistinguished hill stream, rising in the *Kongu* country.

8. *Maruvur* is a little village in the Chola country, near Tanjore.

mainly heath or jungle desert described in *Kadukan-kathai* of the *Silappadikaram*.[9] The area comprises the eastern part of the Kongu, the southern part of the Chola and the northern part of the Pandya countries. The acceptance of the view of the commentators drives us to the impossible position that this uninviting non-descript region was the homeland of all the standard usages of Tamil which Tolkappiyanar observed and recorded. Madura has been celebrated time and again as "the well of Tamil undefiled" and can by no means be excluded from the area of standard speech [10]

We find one commentator on Nannul (circa 13th century A. D) by name *Sankaranamachivayar* candidly disapproving of the location of the standard speech north of Madura; he defines it as coterminous with the Pandya country proper.[11] Of the twelve lands, *Kuttam, Kudam, Karka, Ven and Puli* (comprising the western group) had become Malayalam speaking regions, by the time of the *Nannul* and *Sankaranamachivayar* had presumably to omit these countries from his area of standard speech.

Sen-Tamil Land comprises whole Tamil country.

What then is the correct fixation of the borders of Sen-Tamil country, the region of standard speech, on

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9. Vide ll. 64—67.
"முல்லையும் குறிஞ்சியும் முறைமையில் திரிந்து
நல்லியல் பழிந்து நடுங்குதுய ருறுத்துப்
பாலை வென்பதோர் படிவங் கொள்ளும்."

10. Quotations about the literary greatness and the purity of Tamil in Madura may be multiplied without number:
"தமிழ் நிலைபெற்ற.................மதுரை" (சிறுபாண்.)
"தண்டமிழ் வேலித் தமிழ்நாட் டகமெல்லாம்
நின்று நிலைஇப் புகழ்பூத்த லல்லது
குன்றுத லுண்டோ மதுரை." (பரிபாடல்.)
"பாண்டிய நின் னாட்டுடைத்து நல்ல தமிழ்"

11. The following verse is cited by him in this connection:
செந்தமிழ் நாடாவது—சந்தனப் பொதியச் செந்தமிழ் முனியும்
சவுந்தர பாண்டிய னெனுந் தமிழ்நாடனும்
சங்கப் புலவரும் தழைத்தினி திருந்த
மங்கலப் பாண்டி வளநா டென்ப"

which the whole of *Tamilagam* set its seal of approval? This depends in some measure on the interpretation of the word *tisaicchol* This means not a dialectal word, but 'a loan word from a foreign language.' The definition of a *tisaicchol* as *desikam*, a foreign word, in the Divakaram (an ancient lexicon in verse) supports this view. Due weight has also to be attached to the statement of Panambaranar that the good Tamil-speaking region[12] lay between the Venkata hills and the Kumari; this means that the entire Tamil land was the home of standard Tamil. The duty of safeguarding Tamil was that of all the three crowned heads--the lords of the language.[13] A *tisaicchol* has to be looked for not within the Tamil land, but outside it, in the lands speaking alien languages. The usages shown as examples of *tisaicchol* by the commentators are really *tirichol* (which includes dialectal or unfamiliar or obsolete usages). The interpretation of the sutra of Tolkappiyam on *tisaicchol* will thus undergo an important change. The phrase *Sen-Tamil Sernda* in the sutra will not mean "adjacent to the particular area of Sen-Tamil," but "adjacent to all the twelve lands comprising Sen-Tamil."

Deyvacchilaiyar's View.

The above conclusions are also expressed by one sagacious old commentator *Deyvacchilaiyar* who realized the full implications of the stand taken up by writers before him. A brief translation of the relevant portion of his commentary[14] will make interesting reading.

" People say that the Sen-Tamil land is north of the river Vaigai, south of the river Marudam, east of Karuvur, and west of Maruvur. As there is no authority for this statement and as this implies that Tamil becomes

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12. *தமிழ் கூறு நல்லுலகம்.* This may be correctly interpreted as '*நற்றமிழ் கூறு உலகம்*.' cf. the usage '*நல்ல தமிழ்*'
13. "*தமிழ்கெழு மூவர் காக்கும் மொழி*" (Aham 31)
14. See Collatikaram, Deyvacchilaiyar-urai.

corrupted in 'Korkai, south of the Vaigai, Kodungolur,[15] west of Karuvur, and Kanchi, north of the Marudam, the interpretation is not the correct one." He quotes Panambaranar's *Payiram* and goes on :

"..........In view of the epithet, 'the area of good Tamil' in this verse, it is said that the Sen-Tamil land lies south of the Venkata hill, north of the Kumari, and between the two seas..........The twelve *tisaicchol* lands are Palandipam, Kollam, Kupakam,[16] Singalam to the south of the river Kumari, Konkanam, Tuluvam, Kudakam, Kunrakam, all to the west of *Sahyam*, Karunatam, Vadukam, Telingam and Kalingam to the east *of Sahyam*.

Deyvacchilaiyar also cites the examples of *tisaichol* discussed by earlier commentators, as *tirichol*.

Conclusion.

The conclusion is thus irresistible that all the kingdoms of the Cheras, the Cholas and Pandyas formed the land of "good Tamil" in the early centuries of the Christain era. The twelve lands where *tisaicchol* prevailed are really adjacent countries where different languages like Telugu, Kanarese and Sinhalese were spoken.

Chera-nadu which answers to the divisions, *Kuttam, Kudam, Karka Ven, Puli and Panri* out of the twelve divisions of the Tamil country, also formed an integral part of the standard speech area of ancient Tamil: little wonder therefore that research discovers from day to day, many rare usages of ancient Tamil preserved in the Malabar country.

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15 It is noteworthy that the commentator is as eager to add Kodungolur, a part of the Chera country, to good Tamil speaking areas, as parts of Tondaimandalam and Pandinadu.

16. Kollam and Kupakam, are to be understood, as Deyvacchilaiyar points out, as devoured by the sea. In any case, they cannot be identified with the present subdivisions of the Kerala country.

2. Chera Country in The Sangam Age.

Fertility of the Country.

"In Ēmangada land, the heavy ripe cocoanut falling from on high, breaks the sweet honeyed beehive on the areca palm. Descending further, it pierces the jack fruits and rumbles the mangoes below them. Far down, lowest of all, the plantains fall plentifully to the earth. Far-famed in all directions is this land."[1]

So sings *Tiruttakka Devar* the author of *Jivaka Chintamani*, one of the celebrated Kavyas of Tamil literature. Looking at the beautiful groves of Malabar with the cocoanut and the areca palm vying with each other for the tallest height, we are tempted to say: here is the imaginary Ēmangadam that this poet had in mind; here do the tall cocoaut trees tower on high to whisper praise of God; here do areca palms grow lean and skyward, standing second only to the elder cocoanut. Here again do jack, mango and plantain trees descend step by step from the dizzy heights attained by the cocoanut and the areca palms Probably the author, Tiruttakka Devar himself hailed from Vanji of the Cheras, for one line in his praise lends colour to this belief.[2]

A traditional story bears witness to the fact that Kerala is favoured in a special degree with rains. When the three Kings of the Tamil country—the Cheras, the

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1. "காய்மாண்ட தெங்கின் பழம்வீழ்க் கமுகின் நெற்றிப்
பூமாண்ட தீந்தேன் தொடைகீறி வருக்கை போழ்ந்து
தேமாங் கனிசிதறி வாழைப் பழங்கள் சிந்தும்
ஏமாங் கதமென்று இசையால் திசைபோய துண்டே"

2 வஞ்சி, பொய்யாமொழி புகழ் மையறுகாட்சித் திருத்தகு முனிவன்—Laudatory *payiram* verse on Nacchinarkiniyar usually quoted n all his commentaries. The adjective வஞ்சி should be taken to qualify திருத்தகு முனிவன் even as the other two phrases பொய்யாமொழி புகழ் and மையறு காட்சி qualify it.

Pandyas and the Cholas—approached Indra for the grant of perennial rains, the Cheras and the Cholas sitting on seats lower than that of their host easily attracted his attention. Their prayers were readily granted. But the Pandya got the worst of it as he assumed an equal status with the King of Heaven.

The Chera-nadu has its own composite landscape of seas and hills and dales with a riotous profusion of growth born of the innate fertility of the country. Its forest and mineral wealth as well as its wealth brought in by trade across the seas have been celebrated in *Sekkilar's* verse in the *Periapuranam*.[3]

"Abundant are the riches of the *Malvinadu:* the riches brought in by the sea with its multitudinous waves, the fertility of the cultivated lands, and the wealth of the mountains."

First in Order of Preference.

In Sangam literature, dating from the Tolkappiyam, the Cheras are invariably placed first in order of preference whenever the three monarchs of the Tamil country are spoken of.[4] The fertility of the country as well as the heroism of its Rulers must certainly be reasons for this special distinction. It is well known that the *Patirruppattu,* a collection of poems devoted solely to the Chera Kings, sings the valour of many sovereigns of the line. The *Silappadikaram* is concerned with the exploits of King *Senguttuvan* who carried his arms far north: the *Purananuru* contains poems of praise of these Kings, one of whom made Himalayas the farthest limit of his expedition and another, whose territory reached up to the horizon. (வான வரம்பன்)

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3. "திரைசெய் கடலின் பெருவளமும் திருந்துநிலனின் செழுவளமும் வரைசெய் வளமும் உடன்பெருகி மல்குநாடு மலைநாடு". (விறன்மிண். 2.)

4. சேர பாண்டிய சோழர், (Vide Tolkappiyam Purattinai iyal-Sutra, 60)

Extent

Last but not least, the wide extent of the Chera Kingdom may have contributed greatly to its prestige. According to oft-quoted verses[5] defining the borders of the regions of Tamilnad, the Chera country is said to have enclosed eighty *kadams*. It is also seen that this total area is equal to the areas of the Cholanadu (twenty four *kadams*) and Pandya Kingdom (fifty six *kadams*) taken together. Tondainadu comprises twenty *kadams* and even if it is clubbed with Cholanadu, of which it is an offshoot, the combined area of these two regions, namely, forty four *kadams*, is lesser than the total area of the Kerala country.

While too much reliance cannot be placed on these verses of questionable authorship, it has to be admitted that they hand down an old tradition correct in its major assumptions. Some of the boundaries mentioned in these verses cannot easily be identified, but the areas indicated therein must beyond doubt conform to very ancient beliefs.

The Chera country in the Sangam Age also embraced the territory known as Kongu-nadu (corresponding roughly to the modern Coimbatore and Salem districts.) The literature of the period ascribes this territory to the Cheras; the inscriptions found in the area especially in important places like Palni and Namakkal confirm the fact that only at a very late period, say, the eighth century, the Kongu country came to be considered an independent unit by itself. Popular traditions still current in the Kongu area speak of its Chera origin.

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5. Vide my collection of poems, entitled *Peruntokai* (Stanzas 2091, 2098 2098, and 2102)

Coastal Area.

With the separation of the Kongu region, the Cheranadu shrunk to its present size; with its inland territory cut away, it became a coastal region lying for the most part, between the Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea. In recognition of this peculiar nature, the Cheranadu is also called *Kadal-malai-nadu* (the land of the seas and mountains). One of the old titles of the Zamorins of Calicut is the Sanskrit equivalent of this: *Adri-Abdipa, Kunnalai-Konatri,*[6] (the Lord of the Mountains and Seas).

A study of the Sangam works convinces us that the Cheranadu in that Age had a more densely populated coastal area than its hinterland.[7] This is quite in the fitness of things. Pepper and spices of the Malabar coast attracted a world-wide trade and the population became concentrated in centres of maritime commerce. Early Tamil classics regale us with the pictures of beautiful cities like Musiri, Tondi and Mandai in the Chera country, rich with the accumulated wealth of the ancient world brought in by commerce with Greece and Rome.

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6. குன்று (mountains) + அலை (seas) + கோன் (Lord)--History of Kerala Vol. 1. p. 6.

7. "பௌவத்து நன்கல வெறுக்கை துஞ்சும் பந்தர்க்
கமழுந் தாழைக் கானலம் பெருந்துறைத்
தண்கடற் படப்பை நன்னாட்டுப் பொருநன்"—Pathirruppattu, 55.

3. The Southern Approach to Kerala

Approach by the Aramboly Pass

Early Tamil literature preserves a few accounts of the visits of persons from Tamilnadu to Kerala and a study of these leads to interesting conclusions. We find that the approach to the Chera country through its northern entrance, the Palghat Pass, is less known than a southern entrance at the end of the Ghats probably the present-day *Aramboly* pass. Very near this pass and a little to the north of it, lies the *Malaya* mountain (part of the Western Ghats lying in the Tinnevelly district), the source of the river *Tamraparnī* and the traditional abode of sage Agastya. The Aramboly pass, by virtue of its strategic position, will form the easiest route for persons proceeding from the *Malaya* or *Podiyil* hill to Cape Comorin.

Journeys to the right of the Podiyil

We hear in literature, of many pilgrimages to the Cape for pilgrimage to this extremity of India has been a religious duty from time immemorial. In these cases, the pilgrims usually made a *pradakshina* movement to the right of the *Podiyil* hill and then entered through the Aramboly pass, the present day Travancore territory in which Cape Comorin is situated. The possibility of the pilgrims taking a different route is very remote An alternative route along the present Shencottah—Punalur rail-road lies far north of the Podiyil and must have been in the Sangam Age an impassable mountainous region known only to born mountaineers, for its development into a good road is comparatively recent.

There are routes going straight from Tinnevelly region to Travancore[1] leaving the *Podiyil* hill out of account, but the pilgrims, as a rule, preferred the route *via* the *Podiyil*, worshipping the sacred hill of the Father of Tamil and perhaps bathing in the falls thereon. Pilgrims evidently did not mind the circumlocution of the route as it meant worship of the sacred hill.

In the *Silappadikaram*. *Madalan*, the Brahmana friend of *Kovalan*, is described as proceeding to the Cape, after leaving the hill of the sacred sage to his right. The exact Tamil phrase used is மலைவலங்கொண்டு, and this occurs twice in the poem. The same poem tells us that a great master of debate by name *Parasara*, desirous of having an audience of the Chera Kings far-famed for their bounty to men of learning, journeyed to Kerala, leaving the *Malaya* mountain behind. Probably he went along the *Podiyil* into the Aramboly pass as all pilgrims to the Cape did, and then deflected northwards in the heart of the Chera country.[3] It would thus appear that the Aramboly pass not merely gave access to the Cape for pilgrims taking the *Podiyil* route; it was also used as a general means of access to Kerala.

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1. Maduraikkandam, chapter 5. lines *12*ff.
மாமறை முதல்வன் மாடல னென்போன்
மாதவ முனிவன் மலைவலங் கொண்டு
குமரியம் பெருந்துறை கொள்கையிற் படிந்து
தமர்முதற் பெயர்வோன்.
Vanjikkandam, chapter *27*. lines 68-9.
"மாமுனி பொதியின் மலைவலங் கொண்டு
குமரியம் பெருந்துறை யாடி மீள்வோன்"

2. People also seem to have followed a route along the coast, passing through Korkai — *Manimekalai*, chap. *13*. lls. 83-87.

3. The *Silappadikaram* does not give us the route by which Parasara returned from the *Chera* country but we learn that he stopped at *Tiruttangal* (a station on the S. I. Ry. near Srivilliputtur). Evidently this was an important station on the way (see chapter 23, lines 61-66, 75).

Podiyil to the left.

Besides the *Silappadikaram*, some other Sangam works speak of pilgrimages to the Kumari or Cape without specifying the route adopted. The *Kamba Ramayanam*, the great Tamil epic (*circa* 12th century A. D.) gives us a happy piece of information, confirming the general route along the *Podiyil* hill. *Sugriva*, the monkey-king of *Kishkinda*, tells *Hanuman* the way to Lanka. After searching the entire Chera country from north to south, the traveller comes to an extensive Tamil region (meaning the Pandya country): "If you reach the Tamil Sangam of the sacred sage on the wide Podiyil hill," says Sugriva addressing Hanuman, "you will make the place for ever your home. Therefore, go ahead leaving the mountain to your left and the river, by name *Porunai* (Tamraparni), with its golden waters far behind you. And then you will see the slope of the long range of the Mahendra mountain with little elephants playing about and the (southern) sea."[4]

The above description fits in with the facts of geography. The *Podiyil*[5] hill is correctly placed to the left of the travellers, who proceed from the north of Kerala along the mountain range of the Western Ghats towards Tamilnadu.

Kambar too thus bears testimony to the general vogue of the route along the Podiyil and specially asks his travellers not to stray into the mountain during their wanderings.

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4. Kishkinda kandam-chapter IV, line 31.
தென்தமிழ்நாட் டகன்பொதியிற் றிருமுனிவன் தமிழ்ச்சங்கஞ் சேர்கிற் றீரேல்
என்றுமவ ணுறைவிடமா மாதலினா லம்மலையை இடத்திட் டேகிப்
பொன்றிணிந்த புனல்பெருகும் பொருநையெனுந் திருநதியின் பொழிய நாகக்
கன்றுவளர் தடஞ்சாரன் மயேந்திரமா நெடுவரையுங் கடலுங் காண்டிர்,

5. Podiyil refers to Aghastiakudam Range from which the river Tamraparni takes its origin.

4. Cape Comorin—An Unknown Aspect.

Sacredness to Devi

Cape Comorin is at the present day known to the world at large as a lovely spot where three seas meet and a temple of Bhagavati doing eternal penance for the love of the Lord, crowns the peninsula jutting into the sea. In the past too, down from recorded history, the Cape has retained its special sanctity to Devi. The Mahabharata includes it in its five *Naritirthas*' calling it *Kanyatirtha*.[1] Sangam literature in Tamil speaks of the sea near the Cape as "The sea of the braceleted Goddess."[2] More surprising is the testimony in the Periplus, the account of a traveller of about 60 A. D. in this regard:

(Here) "came those men who wish to consecrate themselves for the rest of their lives and bathe and dwell in celibacy; and women also did the same, for it is told that a Goddess once dwelt here and bathed."[3]

Kumari, the original site of Rama's Bridge

In the early centuries of the Christain era, the Cape seems to have been not merely a bathing ghat sacred to Devi; it enjoyed an additional prestige—the prestige that Darbhasayanam and Dhanushkodi enjoy today. These two places are now considered to be the sites where Sri Rama commenced his great bridge across the sea to Lanka and thousands of pilgims go thither for a bath in the sea "performing its priest-like task of pure ablution round earth's human shores." But a

1. The Mahabharata—iii-83; 8339 iii-118. 10267 (Sorenson's index)
2. The Silappadikaram, Chapter. 8 ll. 1-2 "தொடியோள் பௌவமும்"
3. Schoff's Periplus. pp. 219-220.

study of Valmiki Ramayana and ancient Tamil works would have us believe that the present greatness of Dharbhasayanam and Dhanushkodi once belonged to Kanyakumari, the *Adisetu* or *Setu Mulam*.

The evidence of the Stalapuranam

The Sanskrit *Stalapuranam* of Kanyakumari (also rendered in Tamil verse by Sankara Navalar, circa sixteenth century A. D.) says that Sri Rama, in his search for Sita, came to the Cape and got a boon from Devi that she would help in the construction of the bridge to Lanka across the sea and also stand sentinel over it. The Kumari is thus the source of *Rama Setu* (near Dhanushkodi).[4] The authority of this account—which we might reject as unhistorical, if unconfirmed by other evidence—is substantially strengthened by other definitely reliable sources.

Accounts in Sangam Literature and Valmiki Ramayana

The Manimekalai, a classical work of the poet *Sittalai Sattanar* of the Sangam period, refers to "the beautiful bathing ghat of the Kumari in the sea where monkeys toiled *(i. e.* built a bridge).[5] This line means that people of those days knew and believed that Rama commenced his bridge to Lanka from the Cape. The truth of this belief is also borne in upon us from the highest authority on the Avatar of Rama—the Valmiki Ramayana. This epic tells us that Sri Rama after viewing the southern sea from the top of the Mahendragiri (a peak of the Western Ghats lying in

4. "ஆங்குள இராமசேதுக் காரியாந் சேதுமூலம் சங்கிது." (Chap. vi, verse 10.)

5. "குரங்குசெய்கடற் குமரியம் பெருந்துறை." (Chapter 5, line 37.)

South Travancore) came down to the seashore.[6] Reaching the sea he had seen from on high, he took counsel with his followers about the means of approach to the island of Lanka. The deliberations of Rama were therefore begun near the sea adjoining the Mahendragiri mountain, that is, the sea of the Cape. A sloka in Kalidasa's Raghuvamsa describing the view of the Setu stretching up to the Malaya mountain gives additional evidence of the origin of Rama's bridge from the Kumari.[7]

This fact is further underlined by the Sanskrit *Sankalpam* which every Hindu chants before his bath in the auspicious Kumari ghat:

"आदिसेतोः कन्याकुमारिक्षेत्रे मातुर्पितुर्तीर्थे"

But, how are we to reconcile the conflicting tradition now current that *Darbhasayanam,* together with *Dhanushkodi,* is the old Setu? The same tradition also tells us that the Setu of the east-coast begins somewhere westwards and warrants therefore the assumption that Rama's Setu commenced from the Kumari and embraced Dhanushkodi also in its way.

Pilgrimage to the Cape, a Dharmayatra

One more unassailable proof in favour of the identification of the ancient Setu with the Kumari is

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6. यथा कलमकेदारैः पक्वैरिव वसुन्धरा।
महेन्द्रमथ संप्राप्य रामो राजीवलोचनः ॥
अध्यारोहन्महाबाहुः शिखरं द्रुमभूषितम् ।
.... ॥
वेलामासाद्य विपुलां रामो वचनमब्रवीत् ।
... ... ॥

Yuddhakandam, Sarga Four, 95, 96, 99 & 100.

7. वैदेहि पश्यामलयाद्विभक्तं
मत्सेतुना फेनिलमम्बुराशिम् ।

Raghuvamsa, canto XIII, sloka 2.

the complete silence of works of Tamil literature on Dhanushkodi, save for a solitary reference in *Agananuru*[8] stating that Sri Rama deliberated here about his plans to invade Lanka. On the other hand, the Cape is celebrated time and again in the Tamil classics as the ghat, where men and women, tainted with sins washed them off in the purifying waters. Surely, this unique importance could not have come to it without great and moving associations with Divinity. The *Perumkathai*, the counterpart in Tamil verse of the *Brihat-katha*, speaks of the pilgrimage to the Kumari as a *Dharma-yathra*[9] while other long poems—The Chintamani,[10] Silappadikaram[11] and Manimekhalai[12] refer to the universal habit of journeying to Kumari. So wide-spread and common was this habit of pilgrimage to the Cape that the commentaries to Tolkappiam give the following as illustrative of one of its grammatical rules :[13]

"Give me food—I am returning from a visit to the Kumari."

This reminds us of the prayer of pilgrim-mendicants of today bound for Dhanushkodi and Rameswaram: "I go

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8 *Agam, 70.*

9. Book 2, canto 36, lines 236 - 3.

*" இமயப் பொருப்பகத் திரான் றுறைந்தபின்
குமரித்தீர்த்த மரீஇய வேட்கையின்
தருமயாத் திரையெனத் தக்கிணம் போந்துழி "*

Book 12, cants 20 lines 82 - 3.

குன்றுநீர்க் குமரித் தெண்டிரை யாடிய.........

10. Verse 2020, *சிந்தை நவின்ற திருநீர்க் குமரியாட*

11. Maduraikkandam—chapter 15, lines 12-16; Vanjikkandam—chapter 27, lines 68 - 9.

12. Chapter 5, lines 36 - 8; chapter 13, lines 5-7, lines 80-84.

13. *குமரியாடிப் போந்தேன், சோறுதம்மின் (தொல். சொல், வேற். 15)*

to Rameshwaram; will you not oblige me with alms?" Going to the Kumari was then a great religious duty even as going to Rameshwaram and Dhanushkodi is to-day. And people regarded it also their bounden duty to do acts of charity to travellers on their pilgrim route.

Kumari, sacred as the Ganges

The commonest form of oaths in Tamil inscriptions is the statement that if one fails to do the appointed task, one would be cursed with the curse of sins committed on the Ganges and the Kumari.[14] The Kumari was thus sacred as the Ganges, nay even more sacred, as the Manimekhalai hints.[15] Even people of Benares on the banks of the Ganges came to the Kumari for the upliftment of their soul.

The holy Cape is thus sacred in a special sense as the site of the old Setu. And the famous Sanskrit phrase, "*Asetu Himachalam* (आसेतुहिमाचलम्) gains a new meaning in our eyes: "From the Kumari to the Himalayas."

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14. "கங்கையிடைக் குமரியிடைச் செய்தார் செய்த பாவத்திற் படுவாராகவும் (Inscriptions)

15. Chapter 13, lines 3-7, 78-88.

The Mauryan Invasion and The Aramboly Pass.

The Invasion

In the Sangam poems, there are several references to an invasion of the south by the Mauryas (called in Tamil, Moriyar.)[1] That this invasion is not a mere poetical fiction but a sober fact of history, is confirmed from reliable North Indian sources. Taranath, the Tibetan historian tells us that Bindusara, (circa 296 to 273 B. C.) father of Asoka, slew the kings and ministers of some sixteen capitals, and thus extended his empire 'from sea to sea.' This, as Mr. Vincent Smith states, could not be in Northern India, which was firmly held by Bindusara's father, Chandragupta Maurya. The conquest of the sixteen kings was obviously in the southern country into which "the invaders advanced as far south as Madura and the neighbouring parts of the Tinnevelly district with "a great army." [2]

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1. The first study on this subject was undertaken at my instance by Prof. M. S. Ramaswamy Iyengar in his *Studies in South Indian Jainism* (Page 125 cf). This question was later taken up by Dr. S. Krishnaswami Iyen ar and others (vide Rao Sahib S. Vaiyapuri Pillai's essay on the *Sen-Tamil*-April - May 1947, Vol. 44 - No. 6.)

2. V. A. Smith's "*Early History of India*" . 157-8 (Fourth Edition.)

Details of the Invasion.

The stanzas [3] from which a connected account of the invasion may be evolved are *Mamulanar's* two poems (Aham 251 and Aham 281), *Paramkorranar's* verse (Aham 69), and *Kallil Attiraiyanar's* Poem (Puram 175). In the first of these verses, we are told that the Mauryas came south with a certain warlike *Vadukar* (முரண்மிகு வடுகர்) as their vanguard. They came through a certain pass (அறை, அறைவாய்) in the southern country (தென்திசை மாதிரம்). The southern country here meant is obviously the Pandya country. The place finally reached by the Mauryas was the Podiyil hill.

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3. *Mamulanar's* Two poems:

Aham 251.

" துனைகால் அன்ன புனைதேர்க் கோசர்
தொன்மூது ஆலத்து அரும்பணைப் பொதியில்
இன்னிசை முரசம் கடிப்பிகுத்து இரங்கத்
தெம்முனை சிதைத்த ஞான்றை மோகூர்
பணியா மையிற் பகைதலை வந்த
மாகெழு தானை வம்ப மோரியர்
புனைதேர் நேமி உருளிய குறைத்த
இலங்குவெள் ளருவிய அறைவாய் உம்பர்"

(Lines 6-14)

Aham 281

" முரண்மிகு வடுகர் முன்னுற மோரியர்
தென்றிசை மாதிரம் முன்னிய வரவிற்கு
விண்ணுற ஒக்கிய பனியிருங் குன்றத்து
ஒண்கதிர்த் திகிரி உருளிய குறைத்த ... அறை"

[மாதிரம்—ஈண்டு மண்டிலம், நாடு]

(Ls. 8-10)

Perumkorranar's Aham 69:

" விண்பொரு நெடுங்குடை இயல்தேர் மோரியர்
பொன்புனை திகிரி திரிதரக் குறைத்த, அறை"

(Ls. 10-13)

Attiraiyanar's Puram 175

" விண்பொரு நெடுங்குடைக் கொடித்தேர் மோரியர்
திண்கதிர்த் திகிரி திரிதரக் குறைத்த
உலக இடைகழி அறைவாய் நிலைஇய
மலர்வாய் மண்டிலத் தன்ன
பலர்புரவு எதிர்ந்த அறத்துறை நின்னே"

(Lines 5-10)

Besides the Vadukar forming the advanced guard, another tribe, the Kosar, is mentioned in Aham - stanza 251. It has been so far supposed by all writers on the subject that the Kosar too, formed part of the army of the Mauryas, and that they attacked the chief of Mohur (mentioned in the same stanza). On a close examination of Sangam literature, this view is seen to be untenable.

Kosar, warriors of the Pandyas

Having referred to the *Vadukar* as advance guard, it is extremely unlikely that the same poet *Mamulanar* would mention another new tribe associating it with the invading army. It is more probable that the *Kosars* were soldiers attached to the Pandyas, and that they were staying on the Podiyil hill. Lines 771—7744 of the Maduraikkanji tell us that the Pandya kings had a host of young Kosars, the captain of which was ths famous Maran, probably the Mohur chieftain, *Palaiyan Maran,* overthrown by the Chera king, Senguttuvan Other references in literature to the Kosar speak of them as living in the Chola and Tulu countries. The Kosar where thus evidently warriors belonging to the Tamil country, who served all its Kings. The Kosar forces of the Pandyas must have been stationed on the Podiyil hill, the outpost of the Pandya country, under the general command of the

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4. "பொய்யா நல்லிசை நிறுத்த புனைதார்ப்
பெரும்பெயர் மாறன் தலைவ னாக
கடந்தடு வாய்வாள் இளம்பல் கோசர்
இயல்நெறி மரபின் நின் வாய்மொழி கேட்ப"

5. The line of *Palaiyan—maran* (Mohur chieftains) dates back to a period before the Christian era, as the Ceylon chronicle Mahavamsa indicates. The Mohur chief who opposed the Mauryan forces, was evidently an ancestor of the PalaiyanMaran of the third Sangam period.

Mohur chieftain. The word Podiyil in all the poems cited above has therefore to be read together with Kosar, meaning the Kosar who lived or were stationed on the Podiyil hill.

Kosar - Cross References

Two cross-references explain the nature of the Kosars. The Kunruntokai 15 (sung by the poetess Avvaiyar) speaks of the truthfulness of the plighted word, characteristic of the Podiyil Kosar belonging to four places[6] (நாலூர்). With their resounding war-drums, and blowing conchs, the Kosar, true as their word, took tribute (from the vassals of the Pandyas) and returned to their abode-the Podiyil with the Banyan trees. The very same truthfulness as well as the general heroism of these warriors are emphasized in another set of lines in the *Maduraikkanji*.[7] The point of the simile in these lines is that like the four sections of the Kosar (நான்மொழிக் கோசர்) beautifying the court of their chief of Mohur, the four parts of the Pandya's ministry[8] appeared before him in their best manner. This interpretation aptly fits in with the spirit of the simile and invests it with significance and meaning. On the other hand, if we assume—as has been done by writers on the subject hitherto—that the Kosar were Mauryan soldiers

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6. "பறைபடப் பணிலம் ஆர்ப்ப இறைகொண்டு
தொன்மூ தாலத்துப் பொதியில் தோன்றிய
நாலூர் கோசர் நன்மொழி போல
வாயா கின்றே தோழி..............."

7. "பழையன் மோகூர் அவையகம் விளங்க
நான்மொழிக் கோசர் தோன்றி யன்ன
தாமேஎந் தோன்றிய நாற்பெருங் குழுவும்"

(Lines 508-10)

8. The four parts are interpreted by the commentator Nacchinarkiniyar as priests, commanders, ambassadors and spies (புரோகிதர், சேனாபதியர், தூதுவர், ஒற்றர்). In view of the context of the lines which occur amidst an enumeration of traders and artisans, it seems appropriate to interpret the four parts as the four divisions of the army—ratha, gaja, thuraga, patha.

and hostile to the Mohur chief, the simile becomes almost absurd, suggesting that the Pandya king's ministers resembled his enemies coming to him to collect tribute or otherwise on some inimical errand.

Meaning of Aham Stanza. 251.

The Kosars, with their chief of Mohur on the Podiyil hill must have fought with such serious loss to the *Vadukars* (the advance guard of the Mauryas) that the main Maurya force itself came to the south to put the rebels down. This is the meaning conveyed in Aham 251, which may be translated in full as follows:

"When the battle-front of the Kosar (possessing victorious banners and beautiful chariots, swift as wind), belonging to the Podiyil hill-with its ancient, mighty-branched banyan trees, was severely attacked [9] by the Mauryan army their chief *Mohur*, [10] did not submit. The Mauryas themselves, strangers to the land, came therefore to the battle-field with their huge force, levelling a mountain-pass to enable the wheels of their fine chariots to roll across it."

The Podiyil, a proper name

The Podiyil has to be correctly understood as a proper noun referring to the hill of the same name, and not as a "place of assembly." This meaning is far-fetched

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9. Line 5 of stanza 251: தெம்முனை சிதைத்த ஞான்றை. This is to be taken as தெம்முனையை மோரியப்படை சிதைத்த ஞான்றை ie., when the army of the Mauryas crushed the enemies' battle-front. The invading army referred to above must be taken as the Vadukars, the vanguard of the Mauryas, according to Aham 281 of Mamulanar.

10. Mohur is invariably used for Mohur-chief by way of metonymy (ஆகுபெயர்). Vide also Padirruppattu stanza 49: பொரும்பலரம் செருக்கி மொசிந்துவரு மோகூர்.

and inappropriate, taking into account all the circumstances described in the poems. How could a giant force (மாகெழுதானை) of the Mauryas fight with the Pandyan soldiers under the general ship of Mohur in a meeting place under the Banyan tree meant for the deliberation of a small body of people in a village? On the other hand, the appropriateness of locating one of the important battles of the Mauryan Period in or near the Podiyil hill of mighty branched Banyan trees"[11] will be generally accepted.

The Araivai - an identification

All the Sangam references on the Mauryan invasion particularly mention the fact that the invading army smoothened out a mountian-pass to make their passage easy. The identification of this pass is a matter of much historical interest.

In the first place, the pass has to be located near the Podiyil hill, and not in some far away region. From stanza 175 Puram [12], we learn that at one end of the pass lies a fertile region (which by its produce supported the entire population) and that an enormous traffic passed through it. The mountain itself must have been a recognized landmark across which the war chariots of the foreigners had to go with difficulty. The modern pass that best answers to this description is Araivaimoli or Aramboly pass.[13] This name

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11. Compare *Kurralam*, the name of a hill in the same range derived from short banyan trees.

12. மலர்வாய்மண்டிலம்: A spacious division of country. *Mandilam* is used in this sense in *Kuruntogai* 300 and in *Maduraikkanji* line 190. In respect of the second reference, the commentator *Nachinarkiniyar* gives the meaning *Chera-chola-mandalam*. Probably in the present case, the spacious Mandala may embrace the whole of *Choramandala*, and not merely *Nanjilnad*.

13. The word has been mispronounced in all sorts of ways as ஆரல்வாய்மொழி (Kerala Society Papers Vol. II, P. 27): ஆருவாய்மொழி and ஆரைவாய்மொழி (T. A. S. Vol. VI, 97. 98, 100) The real form of the word must be based on the peculiar location of the place, and must be the very same அறைவாய்வழி used in literature.

itself is only a corruption of the word (அறைவாய்வழி) used in the Sangam poems meaning literally the way along a depression between the mountians.[14] Most important for our purpose is the situation of this pass on the route from Podiyil hill towards the Chera Country. This pass also opens the door to the granary of Travancore - Nanjil Nad, a little strip of land where waving stalks of corn greet the eye everywhere. Further north of the pass, the Mahendragiri peak (5427 feet) towers into the sky and reminds us of the description in lines 10—11 of Aham 281. There is a further coincidence in that the poet of Puram 175, Attiraiyanar, belongs to the village Kallil probably situated in South Travancore.[15] The rough surface of the Aramboly pass was probably smoothened and its boulders removed thus assuring the chariots an easy march across.

Strategic position of the pass

The strategic position of the pass on the route from the Podiyil to the Cape, at the frontier of the Pandya country cannot be over-estimated. As pointed out in the previous chapter, it was a general means of access into the Chera country lying west of the Ghats

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14. வழி in popular parlance easily becomes மொழி or முழி. அறை means an interruption or cut in the continuity of mountains; வாய் means place (மலைத் தொடர்ச்சி அற்ற இடைப்பிடம், கணவாய்). அறை as equivalent to a depression or pass is also used elsewhere in Sangam literature: Aham 209 வெங்கடத்தும்பர் அறையிறந் தகன்றனராயினும்.

15. There is a village by name Kallil, an ancient Buddhist centre near Perumbavoor. Attiraiyanar has compared the bounty of the country near the Araival to the generosity of Adanungan, a chief of the Venkata Hill. The fact that the Aramboly pass and the Venkata Hills are so far removed does not vitiate the identification here made. It is the habit of poets to liken their patrons to objects near and dear to them, regardless of distance. Thus for instance, the poet Odaikilar of Turaiyur (Trichinopoly district) praises Vel of the Podiyil hill citing the sands of Turaiyur (Trichinopoly district) for a comparison (Puram, 136).

and vice versa, into the Pandya country. The Sangam works speak frequently of journeys to the Cape along the Podiyil hill and thousands of pilgrims therefore would have perforce gone through the Aramboly pass, the opening in the Ghats nearest to the Podiyil.[16] Attiraiyanar's happy phrase, உலக இடைகழி, meaning "the passage of the world" confirms the universal use of this pass.[17]

"Unassailable as the Travancore country may generally be considered to be on her landward frontier on account of her mountainous ramparts, which would have rendered her immune from the invading armies of many an ambitious king and intrepid general intent on conquest, the few mountain passes which serve as embrazures in her natural bulwarks constituted the vulnerable points, through which she was now and then attacked by her enemies. Of such passes which served as highways of commerce and travel between Travancore on the western side and plains of the Coimbatore, Madura and Tinnevelly districts on the other, the Arauvamoli Pass (the Aramboly Pass of the English nomenclature) was found to be the most convenient from early days, because at this place a distinct break in the chain of hills was left a gap over three miles width, through which runs the perfectly level trunk road of communication. This Pass consequently formed the portals through which the adventurous Pandyas, Cholas,

16. On enquiry, I learn that the process of levelling the pass has been carried out even in recent years.

17. In the 16th stanza of Aham, Poet Param-korranar mentions that the hero, forgetting to enjoy pleasure with the heroine, whose breast is fragrant with flowers of Podiyil forest of Vel-Ay, went in pursuit of wealth through the mountain-pass which was levelled by the Mauryas. This reference indicates that the residence of the heroine is near to the Podiyil hills and the mountain-pass is not far away from that residence.

Vijayanagara generals and Nayak kings poured in from the other side of the Ghats, whenever the whim of conquest seized them or the lust of plunder tickled their cupidity." [18]

The Mauryas, in their invasion southward, must have first reached the area west of the Ghats. For, generally the kings of the North undertook the subjugation of the Deccan and the Konkan coast before tackling the extreme south. Searching for an opening across the Ghats to reach the Podiyil where the obstinate *Mohur chief* with his Kosar soldiers held out, the invaders must have lighted on the *Aramboly* pass, the artery of the general traffic from one side of the Ghats to the other. Levelling the uneven surface of the natural opening in the western chain of mountains, their cars rumbled on to the Podiyil hill with its mighty banyan trees—a never-to-be-forgotten event leaving its traces in the songs of celebrated poets. But the ancient commentator of *Purananuru* gives a strange interpretation to this passage. According to him *Oriyar* or *Moriyar* were Nagars, Vidyadaras or emperors of Chakkaravala mountains and *Mandilam*, the same as Aditya-mandala, beyond Mount Kailas and so on. This interpretation is purely puranic and does little justice to the undoubtedly historical nature of the references. An account given in the Jaina work *Sripuranam*, has nothing to do with the kings mentioned in the *Aham* and *Puram* songs; it repeatedly speaks of a journey northward of a silver mountain, while the Tamil songs speak specifically of a southern move. The *Aham* poems in question give us a lady's statement that her friend's lover, gone beyond the confines of his native region, is sure to return. To equate

18. T. A. S. Vol. VI, p. 1.

this region with some mythical place like *Aditya-mandala* or *Kailasa* would offend grossly against literary propriety. The lady would, in all probability, refer to some easily recognizable landmark, whether forest, river or mountain, which was considered generally impassable.

The landmark must have been so well-known that when a person left this country, he was invariably referred to "as gone beyond it." In this spirit only the Sangam references speak of lovers going beyond the famous *Araivai* pass. There is then no need to suppose that the mountain should be at a considerable distance from the Tamil country.[19]

The identification of the *Araivai* of the Sangam poems with the Aramboly pass is thus strengthened on all hands. Etymological, historical and geographical considerations seem to indicate unmistakably the inference arrived at.

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19. "நன்னன் பொன்படு மருங்கின் மலையிறந்தோரே (Aham 173), பொதியிற் செல்வன்......திதியன் காடிறந்தோரே' (Ibid 25), வானவருட்டும்பர் மலையிறந்தோரே' (Ibid 389.) எருமை அயிரியாறு இறந்தனராயினும் (Ibid 253). 'கன்னன் எழினிதேம் முதுகுன்றம் இறந்தனராயினும் (Ibid 199). In all these references, a well-known limit near at hand, whether mountain, forest or river is specified meaning that to go beyond it is to go to strange places beyond the familiar country.

SECTION II

PERSONAGES.

On Saints and Poets of Kerala

The Chera country has been the home of men, great in various ways, great in spiritual enlightenment, great in intellect and great as Rulers of the Kingdom. Tamil literature throws a flood of light on personages of all these types. An exhaustive survey of the reference is manifestly outside the scope of this study. Omitting celebrated names, it is proposed to mention here some of the less known saints and poets of Kerala.

Sangam Period

The Chera Kings of the Sangam period, were great patrons of men of letters, some of them being poets themselves. Further, they were also characterised by intense devotion to the Lord. The *Patirruppattu* tells us that Selvakkadumgo Valiyadan was a great devotee of Vishnu who had fixed His image in his heart; he gave away the village of Ohandur as a gift to the Lord.[1] Kalankaikkanni Narmudicheral, another Chera monarch, was devoted to the God of Tiruvanantapuram, whose *Arat* he seems to have performed with great zeal.[2] Cheran Senguttuvan, we are told, was born of the grace of Siva;[3] he sought the blessings of both Siva and Vishnu when he set out on an expedition to the north.[4]

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1. 7th Decad—"Pathikam" *மாயவண்ணனை மனனுறப் பெற்றவற்கு, ஒத்திர நெல்லின் ஒகந்தூர் ஈத்து.*
2. *Vide* my article on *Arat* in this book.
3. Silappathikaram Chapter 26. ll.; 98-99.
4. Ibid. Chapter 26, ll. 55-67.

Poets

Even a cursory study of the Sangam works will convince anybody of the great number of poets hailing from the Chera country. I wish to speak here only of two additions to this large list: Attirayanar of the village of Kallil, author of Puram 175 and Periyanar of Orusirai, author of Puram 137. Kallil[4a] seems to be a village near Perumbavoor. Orusirai must also be located in the Kerala area. Periyanar tells us in the Puram song[5] that never a thought of winning the favour of the three crowned heads crossed his mind as he was wedded to the love of the chief Nanjil Valluvan whom he had known for long. There is an ancient village by name Ochirai in the Karunagapalli taluk of Travancore, near Kayankulam. This name is identical with Orusirai, being only a phonetic variant of the word, with the consonant 'r' dropped and the previous vowel lengthened.[6]

Middle Period

Famous Saints

In the post-Sangam age of religious revival we find that Kerala takes a prominent part, with well-known figures like Kulasekhara Alvar for Vaishnavism, Cheraman Perumal Nayanar for Saivism, and Adi Sankaracharya *for* Advaitism. Besides, we hear of visits to Malainadu, the Chera country, by great saints of the day like Nammalvar and Sundaramurti Nayanar which show the great esteem in which the country was held.

Aiyan Arithanar

Before speaking of saints we have to note one or two scholars of this period. Aiyan Arithanar, the

4a There is another village by the same name in Tanjore District.

5. Puram, 37.
முந்நீரேணி விறல்கெழு மூவரை, இன்றுமேர்ச்சியான் அவரவறியேனே, நீயேமுன்யான் அறியுமோனே".

6. c. f. ஒருவா-ஓவா meaning நீங்காத. ஒறுவாய் becomes ஓவாய். Co, ஓவாய்ப் பல், ஓவாய்ப்பாக்கு.

well-known author of Purapporul Venpamalai—a treatise on the topics of war, state affairs, etc. belonged to the Chera dynasty though he did not actually rule any part of the country.[7] His name suggests that he belonged to Haritha Gotra. He probably belongs to 7th or 8th century A. D.

Nilakantanar, the Musiri Scholar.

He is another scholar stated to have transcribed the commentary of the Irayanar Kalaviyal originally composed by Nakkirar of the Sangam Age, and handed down from generation to generation. The commentary is written in a lively style and is probably the earliest of its type in Tamil literature.

Nilakantanar is called Musiri-asiriyar, that is, the Scholar of Musiri, the old seaport town (celebrated in Sangam works and the writings of travellers like Ptolemy) whose place is now filled by the modern Cranganore.[8] To the scholar of this ancient seaport capital of the Cheras, then, we owe one of the most valuable and ancient commentaries of Tamil. The date of Nilakantanar is probably the eighth century, judging from historical references in his work to the Pandya *Nedumaran* of Nelveli fame.

Viral-Minda-Nayanar.

Viral-minda-Nayanar is included in one of the sixty three holy Saiva saints. The *Periya-Puranam*[9] tells us that he was a Vellala of Kodimada Chengunrur (the present Chengannur). The story about him

7. வானவன் மருமான் ஐயனாரிதன் (புறப். வெண்பாமாலை, பாயிரம்).
8. It was the Chera capital in the medieval period. From very ancient times pure Tamil was spoken here. It is evident from the works of Cheraman-perumal Nayanar and also from the commentaries of Daivachilayar to Thol-kappiyam. (Vide pp. 5—6).
9. *Vide* Viral-mindanayanar Puranam.

is that he used to worship, first and foremost, the devotees of Siva, considering them as even more worthy of his regard than God himself. During his stay in Tiruvarur, he saw Sundaramurti Nayanar going into the temple straight to the inner sanctum, wilfully ignoring the assembly of the Lord's devotees in the *mantapa* in front. He was stirred to righteous indignation at this neglect, and cried aloud in ringing tones that the guilty person was a *bhrashta* or an outcaste, and that even the God who favoured the sinner was an out-caste. Humbled at this outburst, Sundaramurti Nayanar realized his primary duty to the devotees of God; he sang the *Thiruttondattokai* in praise of the *Bhaktas* and won the angry Kerala saint's appreciation. Lord Siva, pleased at the achievement of Viral-mindar, made him the chief of his devotees.

The meaning of the word Viral-mindar is one whose words carried victorious force and strength.[10] It is noteworthy in this connection that "mindu"[11] is very commonly used in the sense "to speak" in all parts of Kerala to which country the poet belonged.

Venattadigal.

Venattadigal is the name of one of the authors of the *Tiruvisaippa*, a collection of Saiva hymns, ranking next only to the *Tevaram*. Venad is the old name of South Travancore. This name is, however, not current in Sangam literature; its usage can be dated as far back as the ninth century A. D. only.

It is a matter of common knowledge that Nambi-Andar-Nambi collected the *Tiruvisaippa* songs

10. "மிண்டாடித்திரிதக்கார்" Thevaram-Swaminatha Panditar's edition page 1057.
11. மிண்டுவார் Do. page 794—10.

in the reign of Raja Raja the Great (*circa* eleventh century A. D.) Venattadigal has, therefore, to be placed between the ninth century and the eleventh century A. D. He was obviously a King of Travancore, the name Venattadigal being familiarly used in inscriptions with reference to the Kings of Venad.

Ilamperuman Adigal

Ilamperuman Adigal is one of the authors of the Eleventh Thirumurai; his poems have an impressive beauty of utterance But we have no definite information as to his identity.

One Ilamperumanar of Kottar is mentioned in the Senthalai inscriptions of Perumbidugu Muttaraiyan Suvaran Maran, a Pallava feudatory belonging to the 8th century.[12] This Ilamperumanar is also the author of a song quoted in the epigraph. Judging from the facts that the dates of the religious revival and those of the Muttaraiya chief correspond, and the persons mentioned are both poets, we have reason to infer that Ilamperuman Adigal of the 'Eleventh Tirumurai' belonged to Kottar in southern Travancore.

Kulasekhara Nambi, the donor of a temple in Burma

One is agreeably surprised to find from an inscription at Main Pagan in Burma,[13] that Sri Kulasekhara Nambi belonging to Mahodayarpattanam (Cranganore) in Malaimandalam or Cheranadu, built a *Mandapa*, provided a door, and endowed a perpetual lamp to a Vishnu temple of the place. Strikingly enough, a famous stanza of *Mukundamala* beginning "*Nasta*

12. Vide Sen-Tamil Vol. VI. p, 6-12. Also Saana-Tamil-k-kavi-caritham—by the present Author. p. 17 and 19.

13. Ep. Ind. 1903 Vol. VII Chapter 27, p. 197. The inscription is published by Dr. Hultzsch.

dharme"[14] composed by the Vaishnava Saint Kulasekhara of Malabar is quoted at the top of the inscription.

The epithets *Sri* and *Nambi* used in the inscription would suggest that he was a venerated man, belonging to a line of temple priests. The date of the inscription as determined by epigraphists from its characters, is the eleventh or twelfth century A. D. Even in this early period, South Indian Vaishnavism had crossed the seas, thanks to adventurous persons like Kulasekhara Nambi of Malabar.

Chendalankara Dasar

Chendalankara Dasar, whose name reminds us of Narayana Dasa[15] was, like the other saint, a Vaishnavite devotee and teacher of the thirteenth century. Many inscriptions in the Tinnevelly District— at Triukkurungudi, Shermadevi. and Kodakanallur, speak of him and his services to temples He is also known as Chendalankara Mahamuni. His name before he assumed the role of a Sanyasin, was 'Vasudevan Kesavan'[16]. Chendalankara is the name of the Deity of Mannarkoil near Ambasamudram and this name is the chosen *dasyanama* of our saint. (Chendu is a weapon for driving horses)

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14 നാസ്ഥാ ധൎമ്മേ ന വസുനിചയേ നൈവ കാമോപഭോഗേ
യദ്ഭാവ്യം ഭവതു ഭഗവൻ പൂർവ്വകർമ്മാനുരൂപം ।

ഏതത് പ്രാർത്ഥ്യം മമ ബഹുമതം ജന്മജന്മാന്തരേപി
ത്വത്പാദാംഭോരുഹയുഗഗതാ നിശ്ചലാ ഭക്തിരസ്തു ॥

15. Vide next article.

16 M. E. R. 1916, No. 400

In the fifth year of Maravarman Sundara Pandya[17] Chendalankaradasa built and consecrated a shrine to the Vaishnava saint Kulasekhara Alvar in the temple of Mannarkoil. He also arranged for the endowment of the village of Vindanur (Samburvadakarai) in the Shencottah taluk, for the maintenance of the shrine. Maravarman Sundara Pandya came to the throne about 1251 A. D. and the fifth year of his reign would be 1255 A. D. The popular belief current today that Kulasekhara Alvar's remains are in Mannarkoil is probably only a misconception based on the founding of the shrine by Chendalankara Dasa. Further, it is interesting to note that the temple of Mannarkoil itself was built long after the age of Kulasekhara, in the reign of the Gangaikonda Rajendra Chola. It is called Rajendra Chola Vinnagaram after the Chola King and is stated to be built by[18] Cheraman Raja Singa Devar in 1013 A. D.

Chendalankara established a *mutt* at Mannarkoil, the scene of his activities, and also at Idaikal. He belongs, however, to Kerala, for his native place is stated to be Mullaippalli of Malaimandalam. Mullaippalli is perhaps the same as Mallappalli in Tiruvalla taluk of Quilon Division[19]

Later Period.

In the years following the fourteenth century when the outlook for Tamil was dark and gloomy, the kings of Travancore kept the torch of its learning burning steadily. Many of them were great poets themselves like Cheraman Perumal Vanchi Marthanda. They encouraged Tamil men of letters, giving munificent dona-

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17. M. E. R. 1916, Nos. 402, 403, 405.

18. Ibid 17, 398.

19. முல்லைப்பள்ளிக் கணக்கர் in inscriptions T. A. S. Vol. VI p. 125.

tions and presents to them. Some prominent instances of their benefaction are cited below.

Marudavana Kavirajan Ramanathan

Ramanatha, the name of a poet of the sixteenth century, is brought to light in inscriptions at the village of Tiruppudai-marudur, (also called Marudavanam) in the Tinnevelly District. Epigraphs of this place numbered 421 and 613 of 1916, tell us that the people of Tiruppudaimarudur, in recognition of his poetic talents, presented him with some specified property also conferring on him the right to sing songs in the festival season. He was given the title Marudavana Kavirajan, *i. e.*, the kingly poet of Marudavana The date of these grants to the poet is M E 731 (A. D. 1554)

Another grant of land in the village of Sadayamangalam to this poet is recorded in a verse inscription of the same place. Perumal Martanda Panaikkaran is said to be the donor: most probably he was a representative feudatory chief of the Kings of Travancore.

The Kaviraja Ramanatha was thus favoured by both King and common folk. His native place seems to have been in Venad, for, in one epigraph he is called " Ramanatha, the Marudavana Kavi, belonging to Venad of Ravivarma "

Thirivikraman of Mullaimangalam

He was praised as a man of truthful utterance. He was much devoted to the goddess Bhagavathy enshrined in a temple at the village of Valvaichakottam about 4 miles to the north-west of Thuckalay. During the reign of Ravi Varma, this Thiruvikraman erected a *mukhamandapa*, an *Ottaikkal mandapam* and many other structural additions in the temple at Valvaichakottam. These facts are recorded in the two verse

inscriptions[18] engraved in the temple wall. The dates of these grants are M. E. 795 and 798.

Muthukumaraswami Pulavar

The name of this poet is also revealed to us only by epigraphy. Verse incriptions[19] in the temple of Ganesa in Radhapuram in the Nanguneri taluk of the Tinnevelly District tell us that the flagstaff in front of the temple was caused to be fixed therein by Rajendra, a senior Tiruvadi or King of Venad. He also arranged for the performance of *Jateebandham*, or the ceremony of the installation of the image in the temple ; the stone-mason who built the temple was Namasivayam. Muttukumaraswami Pulavar is the name of the poet who sang the verses of the incription. This poet must have lived in the eighteenth century, the record being dated M. E. 967 corresponding to A. D. 1791.

Kumaravelu Kavirayar and his Son.

In M. E. 989, on the eleventh day of the month of Kanni, a request was made to the King in Padmanabhapuram Palace by Navinapillai[20] the son of Kumaravelu Muttamilkkavirayar, that the allowance of fifty fanams given to his father the poet, be continued to be given to him. The prayer was assented to, and grant made by Royal Writ.

18.

1. ஆதியெழு நூற்றுடன் தொண்ணூற்றையாண்டில் அற்பசியேழ் முற்றசமி,
யவிட்டம் வெள்ளி, மாதிரைசேரிந் நாளில் இரவிவேந்தன் மனமகி
ழப் பகவதி வாள் வைத்த கோட்டத், தேதிறுற மிறைவியிருப் பதற்கு
மேன்மை யுறுமுகமண் டபமாம தற்கு நாயகன். மூதறிவா லொருகலின்மண்
டபஞ்செய் வித்தான் முல்லைமங்க லன்றிரிவிக் கிரமன் றானே.

2. எத்திசையும் புகழ்பெறவே மருவுகொல்லம் எழுநூற்றுத் தொண்ணூற்றெ
ட்டாமாண்டில், ஒத்துவளர் பங்குனிநா ளாறே டொன்றில் ஒத்துநிற்
கும் கார்த்திகைமுன் மூன்றும் பக்கம், சந்தியவா சகன்முல்லை மங்கலத்துத்
த னிதர னெனுந் தாமோதரர்னைன் பாகப், பத்தியினுல் திருப்பணிகள்
பலவும் செய்தே பரலோக மடைந்தான்பொற் பதம்பெற்றானே.

(T. A. S- Vol. VI. pp. 171-173)

19 M. E. R. 350, 59 of 1929 - 30.

20. The relevant order is quoted in Kerala Society Papers, Vol. II, 8, (p. xvii) by Mahakavi Rao Sahib Ulloor S. Parameswara Iyer.

Kumaravelu was evidently a poet of standing in Tamil; his son, too, must have achieved equal mastery. Father and son, votaries of the Muse, thus flourished under sovereigns who encouraged the arts.

The Vembathur Poets

In recent memory, too, we have shining instances of the patronage of Tamil by Travancore Kings. Maharaja Swathi Thirunal's benefactions were responsible for the composition of various lyrics and two long poems—*Ananta Vilasam* (M. E. 1022) and *Padmanabhaswami Pillai-Tamil*[21] by Vembathur Sankara Subramania Kaviraya Sastrigal. *Ananta Vilasam* describes the greatness of Trivandrum as well as many memorable incidents in the reign of Swati Thirunal.

Sama Iyer, the son of the author of *Ananta Vilasam*' travelled with Maharaja Ayilyam Tirunal during the king's visit to the north with the Dewan, Seshiah Sastriar (A. D. (1872). This visit was undertaken at the invitation of the then Viceroy, Lord Northbrook, to be present at the investiture ceremony of the Begum of Bhopal. The King of Travancore was given a special seat of honour in this investiture ceremony[22] After witnessing the functions, the Maharaja went on pilgrimage to the Ganges where he performed the holy rites enjoined in the Shastras. The unique experiences of this *Gangayatra*, when festivity prevailed all round, have been immortalised in the poem *Gangavilasam* of Sama Iyer. Indeed, there has been an unbroken history of the encouragement of Tamil in the ancient land of Travancore.

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21. This, as well as the other works of Vembathur Poets have recently been acquired for the Oriental Manuscripts Library of the University of Travancore.

22. Nagam Aiya's Travancore State Manual, Vol. I. p. 576.

Narayana Dasa - A Forgotten Saint of Trivandrum

An Outcaste Saint

The proud privilege of numbering an outcaste by name Narayana Dasa among its great men, goes to the City of Trivandrum, the capital of the Travancore State. That this Panchama born Narayana Dasa was venerated as a great Vaishnavite teacher, that he had disciples whose teachings in turn, moulded Vaishnavism both in North and South India are facts unfortunately not so well-known as they should be. Details of Narayana Dasa's life have to be gleaned from the sacred chronicles of the Vaishnavites and these make inspiring reading.

Three saints of Kerala bear the name of Narayana-Narayana Bhranthar, Narayana Dasar and Narayana Guru. It is remarkable that all the three are out-castes, outside the four Varnas. The story of Narayana Branthar related in the modern Malayalam work, Aithihya Mala, bears a striking resemblance to the traditional account of Tiruvalluvar in Tamil Literature. He is said to have a Brahmana father and an outcaste mother. Forsaken by his parents soon after birth, he grew up to be a great saint, working many miracles. Narayana Guru, of recent times, was born in the Ezhava community. All Kerala knows that he rendered signal service to his own community as well as to Hindu society in general. In point of time, our Narayana Dasa's life may be said to fall between the first and the last Narayana.

Narayana Dasa is variously known as *Vilam Cholai Pilli* and *Nalanthikal Narayanar.* The first name indicates his place of residence (*puraidam*),

Vilamcholai being a grove of of wood-apple trees. This, it is learnt, formed a part of *Aranur*, a suburb of Trivandrum. *Pillai* is an honorific suffix attached to the name of great men. *Nalanthikal* means '·having godly virtues,' and this epithet was apparently bestowed on him in reminiscence of its use in the songs of *Kulasekhara Alvar*.[2] It is particularly striking that Narayana Dasa bore as titles, phrases used by *Kulasekhara*, one of the greatest royal poets of his own country.

Discipleship

Narayana Dasa's Guru was *Pillai Lokacharya*, a renowned teacher of the age in the direct line of succession from Ramanuja. *Vilam Cholai Pillai* lived with him at Srirangam devotedly serving the spiritual father who vouchsafed to him the secrets of the spiritual life and the intricacies of the Holy books. After the *Acharya* was called away to His lotus Feet, the disciple went as per the command of his master, to spend the rest of his life in his native town of Trivandrum. Here he passed his days in yoga and meditation. It was in this period that he fulfilled the great task enjoined on him by *Pillai Lokacharya*, that of instructing another eminent saint, Sri Sailesa, in the life of the spirit.

Instruction of Sri Sailesa.

Who was this *Sri Saileesa*? A little digression will not be out of place here. He was the preceptor of no less a person than *Manavala Mahamuni* (*circa* 1370-1443 A. D), celebrated as supreme teacher of one of the main

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1. The names '*Nam-Pill i, Tuppir-Pillai*' may be instanced in point. *Pillai* is also sometimes prefixed as *Pillai Lokacharya, Pillai Pallavarayan*.
2. Nalayira Divya Prabhandham—Perumal Tirumoli, stanzas I (ii) and X (ii) குலசேகரன் சொற்செய்த. நடை விளங்கு தமிழ்மாலை பத்தும் வல்லார் நலந்திகழ் நாரணன் அடிக்கீழ் நண்ணுவாரே. There are many examples of saints assuming as titles, happy phrase used by the Alvars.

sects of Sri Vaishnavas. *Sri Sailesa* (also known as *Tiruvaimoli-Pillai*) once occupied a high office of state under the Pandya King at Madura, but gave it up, to get spiritual edification from *Pillai Lokacharya,* the unique leader of all spiritual aspirants. Sri Sailesa's later days were spent at Alwar Tirunagari, as an exponent of Ramanuja's school of Vaishnava philosophy. The extent of his influence may be judged from the fact that his immediate pupil, one *Sri Purushothamacharya,* is in the line of Gurus of Tulasidas, the famous author of the Hindi Ramayana of Northern India. This is clear from the hierarchy of *Tulasidas'* Acharyas in the informative article on the saint written by G. A. Grierson, Esq., I. C. S., in the *Indian Antiquary.*[3] To Sri Sailesa thus fell an undisputed part in the shaping of Northern Indian Vaishnavism.

A Teacher of Teachers

Narayana Dasa's particular greatness lies in his being chosen by *Pillai Lokacharya* to instruct a person of *Sri Sailesa's* calibre and position. It was the ardent desire of the *Lokacharya* that three persons, of whom our Narayana Dasa was one,[4] should guide the new disciple on right lines. Accordingly, we find that Sri Sailesa journeyed from Alvar Tirunagari to Trivandrum; his meeting with Narayana Dasa in the latter city is thus described in the *Yatindra-Pravana - Prabhavam,* a biography of the life of *Sri Manavala Mamuni.*[5]

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3. Vide the Indian Antiquary, Vol xxii (1893) - pp. 265-6. There are two lists of Acharyas, the *Mohan Das List* and the *Patna List*.

4. The other two persons were *Kura Kulottama Dasar* and *Nalur Achan Pillai* alias *Devadhipa*.

5 This was written by *Pillai Lokam Jeer* in *Manipravala* style *(circa 18th century A. D.)* This Jeer is the author and commentator of many religious books.

Sri Sailesa, desirous of learning the sacred doctrines from the lips of *Vilam Cholai Pillai,* reached Trivandrum. Having worshipped at the feet of the Lord (Padmanabha) who reclines on the bed of the Hooded Serpent, he sought the saintly *Vilam Cholai Pillai,* who always took refuge in feet of *Lokacharya,* the great teacher, who for ever held up the feet of Lord Krishna as man's solace. Finding him in the fragrant garden of wood-apple trees, he prostrated at the saint's feet. At that time, *Vilam-Cholai-Pillai* was immersed in deep *Samadhi,* lost in profound meditation on *Pillai Lokacharya's* dignified figure and noble presence in the midst of admiring disciples So completely had he forgotten all things except his Guru that the spider wove its cobwebs on his body. About four or six days passed thus. Later, he saw the visitor and expounded to him all the great values of life. Hearing the truths of the sacred books, he felt his life-purpose achieved. By the transmuting gold of contact with the Guru, Sri Sailesa cast off the smallness of his life, and returned to his native place, Tirunagari.[6]

Sapthakathai

Vilam Cholai Pillai has given us the essence of his Guru - Lokacharya's treatise *Sri Vachana-Bhushana* in seven verses, called the *Saptha-kathai.*[7]

6. There is a further Sanskrit sloka stated to have been composed by a disciple of Sri *Sailesa,* summarising these events:

ഗത്വാനന്തപുരം ജഗദ്ഗുരുപദദ്വന്ദ്വാശ്രിതം തം കൃപാവിത്
തന്നാരായണദാസമേത്യ വിമലം നത്വാ തദംഘ്രിം മുദാ!
തസ്മാദ്ദ്ദ്ധജനാകതിമെന്തതികൃതം വേദാന്തവാക്യ്ഭൂഷണം
ശ്രീവാക്യ്ഭൂഷണമപ്യ? ശ്രുത്വ? ശ്രീശൈലനാഥോ/ഭവത്||

7. *Pillai Lokam Jeer,* the author of *Yatindra Pravana Prabhavam,* has also written a detailed commentary on these stanzas.

These are in *Venba* metre, and have an exceptional beauty of sound and sense. An *Acharya* is said to instruct one in the five eternal questions[8] (*artha pancha-kam)* of the spiritual life. The "wages" of ingratitude to such a benefactor, says Narayana Dasa, is not mere death but complete extinction of the soul. A preceptor may also have defects, and this is what our poet says in the matter:

" A downright blot it is on the soul to feel pride, remarking 'so-and-so read under me.' Equally disgraceful is the attempt to find out the source or birth of servants and devotees dear to the lord." (Stanza 5) [9]

"O Lord of Srirangam! I have known these to be blots—Banish from me the sins of my soul—not for my poor sake, but for the sake of my faultless Master, for the sake of Our *Acharya Ramanuja*, for the sake of your own innate mercy." (Stanza 6) [10].

Sri Sailesa's laudatory verse on his Guru *Vilam Cholai Pillai* may also be quoted here:

' Long may the figure of Nalanthikal Narayana Dasa inspire us. Blest be the nectar of his holy utterances. Long may his fame endure-the fame of him

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8. Swasvarupam, parasvarupam, virodhisvarupam, upayasvarupam, purusharthasvarupam

9, என்பக்க லோதினார் இன்னா ரெனுமியல்பும்
என்பக்கல் நன்மை யெனுமியல்பும்—மன்பக்கல்
சேவிப்பார்க் கன்புடையோர் சென்ம நிருபணமும்
ஆவிக்கு நேரே அழுக்கு.

10. அழுக்கென் றிவையறிந்தேன் அம்பொ னரங்கா
ஒழித்தருளா யுள்ளில் வினையைப்—பழிப்பிலா
என்னா ரியர்க்காக எம்பெருமா னார்க்காக
உன்ன ருட்காக வுற்று.

whose comfort was in the words of my spiritual father, the great Lokacharya." [11]

Dissolution into the Infinite

The last days of Narayana Dasa remind us of Tiruppan Alwar, another famous outcaste Vaishnava saint. Just as this *Alwar* became one with the God in the inner sanctuary of the temple of Srirangam, the teacher of Trivandrum merged into the Divine presence of Lord Padmanabha. The account of his final dissolution in the infinite is thus given in the *Yatindra-Pravana-prabhavam :*

When the *Nambis* (priests) were performing the holy *Aradhana* of *Lord Padmanabha*, they found *Vilam Cholai Pillai* standing near the feet of the Lord, within the sanctorum. As it was Malayalam country, the priests locked the doors of the temple to avoid the association of a Pulaya, *Vilam Cholai Pillai* being a *Pulaya* who had somehow gained access into the temple. However, the priests on coming out of the shrine, were met by the disciples of *Vilam-Cholai-Pillai* himself, reciting sacred songs and beseeching the temple honours - garland and parviattam (holy cloth) for their departed Master, who had attained the feet of his Guru, *Lokacharya*. The *Nambis*, surprised told them of what they had seen with their very eyes before they left the inner precincts of the temple. All this is well known. *Sri Sailesa* on first hearing of the passing away (of *Vilam-Cholai-Pillai*), performed all the religious rites enjoined in the sastras to be done by a son for a Father-verily this is a model for all to follow. Men coming

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11. *வாழி நலந்திகழ் நாரணதாதன் வடிவம்*
வாழி அவனமுத வாய்மொழிகள்—வாழியவே
ஏறு திருவுடையான் எந்தை உலகாரியன்சொல்
தேறு திருவுடையான் சீர்.

to know of these incidents, song of *Vilam Cholai Pillai* along with other *Acharyas*.[12]

Date.

We may infer that Narayana Dasa flourished about the thirteenth or fourteenth century, as Sri Sailesa who survived him was born in 1307 A. D. An inscription of the Hoysala King Ramanatha[13] also seems to support this. By order of this King, the management of a temple in the Kannada country was entrusted to one "*Nalanthikal Naranadasar*". It is quite possible that this holy man may be identical with our saint, since King Ramanatha (brother of Narasimha III) ruled the Trichinopoly country with Srirangam and Cannanore as headquarters about the period 1280—1294 A. D. Narayana Dasa at about this time must have been living at Srirangam, serving his period of discipleship under *Pillai Lokacharya*. The coincidence of the appellation, *Nalanthikal*, cannot be merely accidental. If the identification of the Narayana of the inscriptions and the Narayana of literature is correct,—we have reason to believe so—Narayana Dasa of Trivandrum enjoyed the patronage of the Kanarese Kings, and also for some time looked after the affairs of a temple in the Kanarese country.

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12. The song referred to recounts the list of the Acharyas including *Narayana Dasa*.
13. Published in the Epigraphica Carnatica, Vol. IX - page - Tamil portion.

Muvayiravar—A Religious Group

Thillai Muvayiravar

Besides famous individuals, we hear of groups of servants of God like the famous Thillai Muvayiravar (the three thousand devotees of Chidambaram). This group was one of learned Brahmans engaged in temple services. These servants of God are placed in the front rank of devotees in the Thirut-tondat-tokai [1] of Sundaramurti Nayanar. They had the hereditary right of crowning the Chola Kings. What is more important, they had also the right of service in the Vishnu temple at Chidambaram and were devotees of this God too, as is witnessed by the songs of Thirumangai Alvar and Kulasekhara Alvar. [2]

Muvayiravar of Kerala

There is a group known by the name Muvayiravar in the Kerala country also. Nammalvar sings of them in his verses on Sirrarru Vishnu shrine in Tiru-Chengunrur. [3] Sri Ramanuja is also said to have been delighted at the greatness of the Muvayiravar in Thiruchengunrur.[4] Popular belief among the Brahmanas in present-day Chengannur also makes

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1 'தில்லைவாழ் அந்தணர்தம் அடியார்க்கும் அடியேன்'—opening of the *Thirut-tontat-tokai—Thevaram.*

2 Periya-Thirumoli, II. ii, 8—மூவாயிர நான்மறையாளர் நாளும் முறையால் வணங்க—Perumal-Thirumoli. X, 2—அந்தணர்கள் ஒரு மூவாயிரவர் ஏத்த.

3 Thiruvaimoli, VIII. iv, 9, 10—மனக்கொள்சீர் மூவாயிரவர்; அமர்ந்த சீர் மூவாயிரவர் வேதியர்.

4 Ramanujarya-divyacharitai, p. 186.

clear the fact that there were two groups—*Ahatte Muvayiram* and *Puratte Muvayiram*, and that the survivors are descendants of the *Ahatte Muvayiram*.[5] The facts noted below seem to indicate that the three thousand of Kerala and the three thousand of Thillai form one and the same group, known by the same name, but stationed in different parts of South India.[6]

Evidence of Thillai Muvayiravar's connection with Malabar

(1) The Periyapuranam which preserves all Saiva tradition and legend tells us a story about Kurruva-Nayanar,[7] that he conquered all the Kings of the south. Being a minor chieftain himself, he aspired to wear the crown of the Cholas, and asked the Thillai-Muvayiravar, the guardians of the Chola crown, to instal him on the throne even as they crowned the Cholas by right. The holy men refused to demean themselves to do this act, and fearing the consequence of the wrath of Kurruva Nayanar they went away to the *Chera-mandalam* leaving *only one* family to be in charge of the Chola crown.

(2) The Sembandar's Tevaram songs[8] give the information that the Deity of Kilai-Paluvur, not far from Chidambaram, was worshipped by Brahmanas belonging to Malabar. Also the chieftain of the place

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5. There are many other groups from Nammalvar's *verses on Thiruvallaval* (Thiruvalla), we learn of a gruop of thousand engaged in worship there (Thiruvaimoli, V, 9, 10—நல்லருள் ஆயிரவர் நலனேந்தும் திருவல்லவாழ்; An Inscription of Parantaka Pandya at Kanyakumari (*T. A. S. Vol. I, No. 3*) speaks of a group of thousand and eight (ஆயிரத்தெண்மர்) learned priests.
6. Ashta-sahasram Brahmanas are today spread out in different parts of the country, but still go by the same name.
7. Vide Periyapuranam, Kurruvanayanar - puranam.
8. அந்தணர்கள் மலையாளர் ஏத்தும்.........பழுவூர் அரனே: மலையாளர் தொழுதேத்திப் பயில்கின்ற பழுவூரே—Thevaram, Swaminatha Pandithar Edition p. 325 Stanza. 4, 11.

Paluvettaraiyar, seems to have been of Kerala descent; his daughter was married to Chola Parantakai[9]. It is thus beyond doubt that people having associations with Kerala lived in Tamil Nad, and that one group of them was actually engaged in temple worship near Chidambaram.

(3) Perur, near Coimbatore, has a great Saiva shrine, and is known as Melai-Chidambaram, as Lord Siva showed himself as Nataraja to Sundaramurti Nayanar at this place. The shrine is particularly held sacred by the people of North Kerala who go there for performing important ceremonies like sharaddha. The Sthalapurana of Perur tells us that the Muvayiravar of Thillai had associations with the God of the place. This is clearly an indication of the ties between the Eastern group of the Muvayiravars and the Kongunadu which orginally formed a part of *Malai-Mandalam*.

(4) In the Mackenzie manuscripts dealing with the traditions of Thiruvanchaikkalam near Cranganore the following pieces of information are noteworthy.[10] For installing the deity of the temple of Thiruvanchaikkalam, the persons belonging to the group of Thillai Muvayiravar came with an image of Siva from Chidambaram. Among them were Muttuvelutta Nambiar and Karutta Nambiar, both stated to be

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9. *பழுவேட்டரையர் மகள் சோழபராந்தகன் தேவி* (T. S. A. Vol. V p. 113.)

10. This information was given by my friend Mr. G Harihara Sastrigal of Trivandrum, who worked on the Mackenzie MISS. in the University of Madras. "*சிதம்பரத்திலிருந்து தேவரோடேகூடி வரப்பட்டவரென்றும்,......சொல்லப்பட்டது, தில்லை மூவாயிரம் வகை முத்துவெளுத்த நம்பியார், கறுத்த நம்பியார், கைவிளக்கு மேனவன், பட்டோள் மூணுவீட்டுக்காரர், தந்திரிக் குன்னத்துப் பட்டேரி.*"

"*திப்புகல்தான் திருவஞ்சைக்களமூர்த்திகளை உடைத்துக் கோயிலையும் பாழ்பண்ணின பின், சந்திரசேகர மூர்த்தியையும் சபாபதி மூர்த்திகட்குப் பிரதியாக சிதம்பரத்திலிருந்து பண்டாரம் விக்கிரகங்களையுங் கொணர்ந்து பிரஷ்டை பண்ணியது.*"

Cheraman Perumal Vanchi Martanda— A Poet King of Travancore.

As editor of the Sen-Tamil more than forty years ago, I had occasion to go through an inscription from Muvalur in the Tanjore District brought to my notice by the late Pandit Pinnathur Narayanaswami Iyer. This record cited a stanza of Kambar besides mentioning a Chera King. At my suggestion, the inscription was subsequently published in the Sen-Tamil [1]. The identification of the names mentioned in this record as well as the history regarding these personages have been engaging my attention off and on. The conclusions I arrived at recently are given in this article.

The Tamil portion of the inscription consists of four verses with an introduction which says that Akhila kalavallavan Cheraman Perumal Vanchi Martanda Tiruppa-mutta Tiruvadi made a present of certain laudatory verses to a famous Pillai-Perumal. Of the four verses the first is fragmentary and its meaning is not clear.[2] A translation of the other verses is given below.

" The river Kaveri, the Chola country, the race of Karalas (a section of Vellalas), scholars, chieftains and virtuous men, and the town of Puduvai worthy of the

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1. Sentamil, Vol. IV. p 251.

2. "தேமாவயங்குசெய் யா...ம பாற்கடற் சேதிபர் கோன்
மாமால் புதுவைச் சடையென்னனெனன் மங்கையுங்கே
ஆமா மனையந்த வாயிழை செந்த...தாசையெல்லாம்
பேரமாறு கண்டு விட்டாளை று கூறும்ப் பூந்தொடிக்கே"

world's esteem—the prestige of all these has been enhanced by the birth of Pillai-Perumal".[3]

" Who can sufficiently praise the house-hold charity of the Puduvai Sadaiyan having the lance that destroys all falsity? For the waters of the Kaveri are just enough to wash the hands of those who come to partake of his hospitality." [4]

"Lo! Behold the Chedipa, Pillai-Perumal, with hands bountiful as the clouds. O'ye men of earth, leave misdeeds and give food to the poor thus vanquishing all evil." [5]

The following points emerge from the inscription. Vanchi-Martanda, beyond doubt a Chera king, as the *birudas*, Vanchi Cheraman Perumal and Tiruppa[6] mutta Thiruvadi show, has praised the virtues of a chieftain, Pillai-Perumal. There must have been potent reasons for this praise of a personage who appears to have been a mere chieftain, by a Chera king reigning over a great part of Kerala. Who, then, was this worthy chief?

Pillai-Perumal

From the verses of the Muvalur inscription itself we may infer that besides being a Vellala (of the

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3. "காவிரியைச் சோணாட்டைக் காராளர் தம்மரபை
நாவலரைக் காவலரை நல்லோரைப்—பூவலயம்
உள்ளத் தரு புதுவை யூரைச் சிறப்பித்தான்
பிள்ளைப் பெருமாள் பிறந்து.

4. மெய்கழுவி வந்து விருந்துண்டு மீளுமவர்
கைகழுவ நீர்போதுங் காவேரி-பொய்கழுவும்
போர்வேற் சடையன் புதுவையா னில்லறத்தை
யார்போற்ற வல்லா ரறிந்து.

5. பேரோசைப் பிள்ளைப் பெருமாளைச் சேதிபனைக்
காரோசைக் கையானைக் க(ண்டீ)ரே-பாரோர்
விடுங்கோள் கொடுங்கோ(ள்) விழியருள் பூண்டன்ன
மிடுங்கோள் கொடுங்கே (டிற?)

6. *Tiruppa* is the contraction of *Tiruppapur*

Karala sub-caste) he belonged to Puduvai or Puducheri in the Chola-nadu, that he was also called Chedipa and that he was a virtuous man whose charities formed an ideal for others to follow. The third stanza quoted in the inscription praising Sadaiyan's hospitality is also found in the Tamil-navalar - charithai (verse 80) (an informative collection of accounts of Tamil men of letters) with the note that it was sung by Kambar. Evidently the Sadaiyan of Puduvai must be the patron of Kambar himself. Probably this Sadaiyan was an honoured elder member of Pillai Perumal's family. And we may well suppose that as an elder member of that family, a song in his praise by the prince of poets was treasured up as a family heirloom, by later generations

This famous patron of Kambar who lived about the end of the twelth and the biginning of the thirteenth century, had a son by name Chediraya. But we cannot identify this Chediraya with the Pillai-Perumal-Chedipa of the Muvalur record for reasons shown below.

The Virachilai Inscription

An exact cross-reference to Pillai Perumal of Puduvai has been noted by me in an inscription of the Pudukottai State. An epigraph dated in the reign of Virapratapa Devaraya Maharajah (saka 1365 corresponding to A. D. 1443) records gift of lands by Pillai Perumal,[7] the reformer of the Chola-mandala, chieftain of Puducheri, and a native of Puducheri lying in the Tiruvarur Kurram of the Jayamanicka Valanadu of the Chola-mandala. Needless to say, this Pillai Perumal is the

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7. "சோழமண்டலத்துச் செயமாணிக்க வளநாட்டுத் திருவாரூர்க்கூற்றத்துப் புதுச்சேரிச் சோழமண்டலத் தாபனாசாரியன் புதுச்சேரியுடையான் பிள்ளைப் பெருமாள். (Pudukkottai State Inscriptions, No. 705, Page 486.)

identical cheiftain of the Muvalur inscription whose date therefore must be about A. D. 1943, when Emperor Virapratapa Devaraya II ruled over Vijayanagar. Other inscriptions of the times notably one at Tirukodika [8] also refer to the influence of this Chedipa chief, his gifts and patronage of Tamil bar is calling him the "crown of scholars" (Sen-Tamil Sikhamani). Pillai Perumal Chedipa descendant of an ancient family traditonally known for generosity is thus seen to have lived in the later Vijayanagara period; perhaps he was also connected in some way with the administration of that empire itself

Chola Mandala Sthapanacharya

The fact that he is called *Cholamandala Sthapanacharya* would indicate that he was responsible in some measure for reviving the ancient glory of the Chola country. The nature of the help rendered by him to this country is not known. We learn however that there was about this period, "a great ruin" in the affairs of the Tanjore region, a lot of anarchy and local repression in the collection of taxes. An inscription of Tiruvaigavur[9] states that the people were paying taxes to the temple authorities but not to the crown. The temple authorities probably leased out the right to collect taxes. These lessees mismanaged the collection work, for, we read that collections were not made by any one single person" At last, after considerable negotiation, the people got the list of "admittedly payable" taxes fixed and had them engraved on the temple wall.

In this fixation of taxes, and restoration of order out of maladministration, some part if not the most

8. A. R. No. 33 of 1925. p, 94,

9. A. R. No. 59 of 1914; 1915, pp. 106-108.

important part has to be assigned to the influential local chieftain of the region who is also known to have lived at about the same period—Pillai Perumal Chedipa. Probably, the people, grateful for the boon of peace after the woes of anarchy, honoured him as 'the Master who re-established the glory of the Chola—maṇdala.'

Cheraman Vanchi Martanda, probably Sri Vira Rama Martanda Varma.

The Muvalur inscription reveals that the alliance of Pillai Perumal Chedipa of Puduvai and perhaps a feudatory chief of the Vijayanagara empire in the south, was valued by the Chera king Cheraman Perumal Vanchi Martanda. It follows, therefore, that this king, a contemporary of the chief, must be placed in the middle of the fifteenth century A. D --about A. D. 1443, the date of Virachilai inscription mentioned before.

The list of kings of the Royal line of Travancore relating to the fifteenth century as given in Sri V. Nagam Aiya's Travancore State Manual, Vol. I, pp. 267 and 275—6 is as follows:-

1. Udaya Martanda Varma
2. Venad Mootha Rajah
3. Vira Rama Martanda Varma, (Senior Tiruvadi of Tiruppappur)
4. Aditya Varma (Senior Tiruvadi of Siraivoy)
5. Sri Vira Ravi Ravi Varma (Senior Tiruvadi of Tiruppappur.)

Of these Kings the first and third are Martanda Varams[10]. The first Udaya Martanda Varma died

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10. These Martanda Varmas ruled different tracts of the Chera country at the same time. *Vide* Travancore State Manual, Vol. 1, pp. 267 and 276.

in 1444 (619 M. E.) The second, Sri Vira Rama Martanda Varma, ruled from as early as 1439 A. D. (614 M. E) as a Vatteluthu inscription of his at *Tirunavaykulam*[11] proves. The date 1439 A. D. agrees with A. D. 1443, the date of the Virachilai inscription and what is more important, Sri Vira Rama Martanda Varma specifically bears the title mentioned in the Muvalur record-the Mutta (Senior) Tiruvadi of Tiruppappur. The titles Senior Tiruvadi of Tiruppappur and Senior Tiruvadi of Siraivoy are assumed alternately by kings of Travancore of this period, reminding us of the alternations of Rajakesari and Parakesari by Chola kings Maran and Sadaiyan by Pandyas.[12]

We have two inscriptions at Shermadevi[13] in the Tinnevelly district referring to a Tiruppappur Mutta Tiruvadi dated A. D. 1444 and 1448 which have also to be referred to Sri Vira Rama Martanda Varma as Sri Udayamartanda Varma died by A. D. 1444 (M. E 619). Acting on the material available, the probability of the dates, and the occurrence of the key title Tiruppapur Mutta Tiruvadi, we may identify Sri Vira Martanda Varma with the Vanchi Martanda of the Muvalur record.[14]

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11. T. A. S. Vol. 1, p. 300.

12. Sri Nagam Aiya also calls attention to the fact that the titles are borne by the elder and younger brothers of the same family.

13. A R. Nos. 608 and 638 of 1916.

14. With the avilable information, it is not possible to know if the elder Udaya Martanda possessed the title Tiruppa Mutta Tiruvadi and hence the above inference. If the elder Udaya Martanda is meant, the Muvalur record would have mentioned specifically Udaya Martanda and not merely Martanda. However, the upper limit of the date of Vanchi Martanda of Muvalur inscription, namely, fifteenth century, has been fixed beyond doubt.

T. A. Gopinatha Rao's identification—its improbability.

Sri. T. A. Gopinatha Rao, the eminent epigraphist, identifies our Vanchi Martanda with an Udaya Martanda Varma (1567—1597 A. D.)[15] reigning one hundred years after the middle of the fifteenth century, a contemporary of Achyuta Deva Raya of Vijayanagara. Pillai-perumal, according to him, is none other than a traitor, Chellappa of the Chola country, who is stated to have taken refuge with the Travancore King. We are told that the Vijayanagara Emperor Achyuta, defeated Thiruvadi Udaya Martanda Varma and demanded the traitor from him as one of the conditions of peace.

The chief of the Muvalur record—Pillai Perumal—is somehow supposed to have incurred the displeasure of the Vijayanagara emperor and taken refuge in the court of his friend, Marthanda Varma (of the late sixteenth century) who had finally to surrender him to the conqueror Achyuta Deva Raya.

All the above suppositions are evidently wide of the mark, the identification of Pillai-perumal Chedipa (praised as the Cholamandala-Stapanacharya and famous as the jewel of scholars in inscriptions) with a rebel by name Chellappa is entirely mistaken. It does not even have the fundamental likeness of names, not to speak of the differences in dates. Chellappa was not a native of the Chola country, not even a Tamilian. In inscriptions (I. M. P. Rd. Nos. 229 & 230) he was described as Saluva Vira Narasimha Raya (Nayaka) alias Chellappa. He was a viceroy under the Vijayanagar emperors Krishna

15. T. A. S. Vol. 1, pp. 55.56.

Deva Raya and Achyuta Deva Raya and he ruled the Tamil Province in the south. According to *Achyuta raya Abhyudayam* (a poem in praise of Achyuta Devaraya) Chellappa was punished severely on the charge of treason by Achyuta Deva Raya (Historical Inscriptions of South India, pp—246-247) The Virachilai inscription which is couched in unambiguous language should therefore be taken as the correct basis of identification.

Akhila-Kala-Vallava.

Cheraman Perumal Vanchi Martanda of the Muvalur epigraph, the author of a Tamil song in praise of one of his allies, was evidently a Tamil poet of distinction. He also has the *biruda* Akhilakala-Vallava—one learned in all the arts. It is indeed a pity that accounts of this poet-king's benefactions for learning, besides his gifts to temples, have not come down to us. Only imagination has to fill in the outlines of a discerning life of devotion to arts and literature led by this Kala-vallava.

Vira Rama Martanda Varma was not alone in his love of Tamil; his brother Champaka Aditya Varma caused in Kollam year 644 (A. D. 1469) a bell to be hung up in the temple at Tirukkurungudi (in the Tinnevelly District). On the bell are a Sanskrit sloka and a Tamil verse describing the royal donor. The Tamil poem is to this effect:

"King Aditya of the Southern Vanchi, prince of Siraivoy in Jayatunganadu, learned in all the arts of the Universe, born in Visakhom of the Kanni month presented a bell to God Nambi of Tirukkurungudi in

the Kollam year 644, as though inviting Lord Brahma to join in the worship. [16]

Tamil inscriptions reveal that two brothers of the royal line of Travancore—Martanda and Aditya—evidently set up a precedent by assuming the title Akhilakala-vallava, celebrating their unique delight in, and patronage of, learning.

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16. செயதுங்க நாட்டுச் சிறைவாய்மன் ஆதித்தன் தென்வஞ்சியான்
வியலொன் றகில கலாவல்லவன் கன்னி விசாகம்வந்தோன்
நயமொன்று கொல்லம் அறுநூற்று நாற்பத்து நாலிலன்பாய்
அயனும் பணிய மணியணித் தான்நம்பிக் கன்புகொண்டே.

T. A. S, Vol. IX. p 9

A Chera King's benefaction.

Perum-Kunrur Kilar: a poor poet.

One of the Chera kings of the Sangam age was the author of an unparalleled benefaction to a poet; the story of his gift reads like a romance, reminding us of Sri Krishna's bounty to Kuchela;[1] it has to be pieced together from the Purananuru and the Patirrup-pattu. A little reading between the lines is also necessary to give us the full picture of the veiled munificence of the king. A connected account of the benefaction of the king will be given first and the literary evidence therefor, discussed later.

Perumkunrur-Kilar was the poet of Perumkunrur, a village which probably has to be located in Kerala. On him, the Goddess of Learning showered all her gifts. But the Goddess of Wealth ever at variance with the Goddess of Learning, looked none too kindly on him. He was extremely poor, and to relieve his poverty, he sought the patronage of the kings of the land, as was the custom of his days. Approving of this general custom, even the poet Valluvanar, the author of the sacred Kural, tells us[2] that begging of great men with magnanimous hearts is no beggary; it has a noble beauty, all its own.

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1. The well known story of *Satti-murrap-pulavar* has been so for believed by students of Tamil literature to be the earliest story in Tamil resembling *Kuchela's*. But the present account of the gifts of the Chera King dates back to the Sangam age and goes before the story of Satti-murrap-pulavar.

2. "கரப்பிலா நெஞ்சிற் கடனறிவார் முன்னின், றிரப்புமோ ரேஎ ருடைத்து"

His stay at the Chola and Chera Courts.

Our poet first went to the court of the Chola king Ilamchet-chenni and sought his bounty.

"O Senni[3] of the swift horse and royal umbrella reaching up to the heavens! Even as happens in an assembly of great men where the cry "help the distressed" meets with ready response, quickly rid me of my poverty dwelling in this my body of the five senses and blighting the growth of my knowledge."

Senni, the Chola king, did indeed favour the poet with many presents, but these were apparently not plentiful enough to banish his abject poverty.

Perumkunrur-Kilar then retired to the capital of the Chera king, Ilam-Cheral Irumporai. This king, who had heard of the far-famed reputation of the poet, welcomed him warmly and showered on him many rare gifts. He greatly relished the company of this king of song and the latter was also lost in wonderment at the excellences of his court. The songs of the ninth decad of the Patirruppattu composed by the poet all in praise of the Chera monarch, bear witness to these facts.

The Chera King's gorgeous entertainment and cold farewell:

To the singer of songs, thus immersed in the splendour of the court and living a luxurious life of

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3 "வான்றோய் நீன்குடை வயமான் சென்னி!
சான்றோ ரிருந்த அவையத் துற்றோன்
ஆசா கென்னும் பூசல் போல
வல்லே களைமதி யத்தை உள்ளிய
விருந்துகண் டொளிக்குந் திருந்தா வாழ்க்கைப்
பொறிப்புணை ருடம்பிற் றோன்றியென்
அறிவுகெட நின்ற நல்கூர் மையே"

(Purananuru—266

ease, memories of his family in a far off village, arose forcibly on one fateful day. Were his wife and children still starving? How could the presents he brought home from the Chola kingdom help to sustain them for so long? Stricken with the pangs of remorse, he went straightway to his patron and intimated him of the inner agony of his heart. Engrossed more than ever in the usual affairs of state, the king paid no heed to the words of the poet. Not disappointed, Perumkunrur-Kilar pressed his request again once or twice. The king got annoyed and chided the poet for having troubled him for petty personal comforts when he was engaged in his state affairs affecting millions of his subjects. He plainly told the poet that he had no objection if he insisted on going. Feeling dismayed at this sudden worsening of the situation, the native of Perumkunrur gave expression to his poignant sense of separation.

4 "If, regardless of your duty to protect the world people of your class are to behave like this, changed in affections and unrighteous in actions, verily, people like me should not have been born in this kingdom.

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4. மன்பதை காக்குநின் புரைமை நோக்காது
அன்பு கண்மாறிய அறனில் காட்சியொடு
நும்மனோரு மற் றினைய ராயின்
எம்மனோ ரிவட் பிறவலர் மாதோ (Puram. 211)

The force of the word இவண் has to be noted. It clearly implies that if the reigning King was ungenerouse, poets like him living on charity need not have been born in *his Kingdom*, the *Chera-nadu*.

[5] "I leave, Oh king! Behold, with my helpless loneliness before me and despair gnawing at my heart, I go, like the fallen battle-front of your opponents. Oh lord of fame who vanquishes princes! Indeed, you may not feel ashamed of your outward show of concern which once raised hopes in me, only to be falsified later. Yet I go, bowing to your majestic shoulders (rich with the conquest of new territories) which earned endless praise from my delicate tongue, making you also blush with pride."

His reception at his native village; veiled munificence of the King:

Even at this heart-broken cry, the king in the audience-hall appeared unmoved to the surprise of all. Having nothing with him except his clothes, the poor poet walked his way from the Chera capital, cursing his malignant fate. Reaching his native village after a wearisome trudge, he was amazed to find it completely transformed; he doubted whether it was his own old Perumkunrur. He asked himself: what are those mighty structures where once my cottage stood? As he stood bewildered some of the sentries guarding the village appeared before him. The poet made bold to ask them the name of the village lying before

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5. "விடுத்தேன் வாழியர் குரிசில்! உதுக்காண்
அவல நெஞ்சமொடு செல்வல்நிற் கறுத்தோர்
அருங்கடி முனையரண் போலப்
பெருங்கை யற்றவென் புலம்புமுந் துறுத்தே.
(Puram 210)

"அரைசுபடக் கடக்கும் உரைசால் தோன்றல்
, ... , முன்னாட்
கையுள் ளதுபோற் காட்டி வழிநாட்
பொய்யொடு நின்ற புறநிலை வருத்தம்
நாணா யாயினும் நாணக் கூறியென்
நுணங்கு செந்நா வணங்க வேத்திப்
பாடப் பாடப் பாடுபுகழ் கொண்ட நின்
ஆடுகொள் வியனமார்பு தொழுதனென் பழிச்சிச்
செல்வல்"
(Puram 211)

him. "Perum-kunrur," came the reply, followed by a rough question in authoritative tones; "Who are you?" The stranger said that he belonged to that very village, and asked to whom the tallest building standing out there, belonged. The soldiers began to make fun of him: "If you know not this famous building, how can you belong to this village—you are apparently lying." Luckily, one of the older residents of the village then came out, and looked at the visitor in astonishment. He whispered something to the sentry and went inside the village. A few minutes later, a noice of revelry arose within the gates; a beautiful palanquin followed by a procession with the music of many instruments came forth to meet the stranger at the gates. Perumkunrur-kilar found his wife and children clad in finest garments, among the group. As one in ecstatic dream, he stepped into the palanquin to go home. Slowly, he realized that the king's cold behavicur at parting was only a pretence to mask his supreme generosity. Feeling grateful beyond measure, he blessed his benefactor wholeheartedly. The story of Perumkunrur-Kilar became known throughout the Tamil country; the bounty of Ilam-Cheral-Irumporai became a household word.

Literary Evidence:

The truth of the above account of Perum-Kunrur-Kilar which reads like a romance, will be evident from stanzas 210 and 211 of Purananuru as compared with the colophon to the ninth decad of the Pathirruppattu. The former Puram stanzas say that the poet went away from the court of the Chera king empty-handed, with only his native poverty as his companion; but the colophon runs

in a different strain:[6] "The reward for Perum-Kunrur–Kilar's songs: the king gave thirty two thousand *kanams* to be given away freely by the poet to men of clear understanding (learned men) to the extent of causing bewilderment to them and without his knowledge enriched his village and his house spreading beauty and delight around. Along with countless rare treasures of wealth, the proper maintenance of the many thousands was also cared for, by engaging soldiers for watching them."

How are we to reconcile these two conflicting statments - one stating that the poet went away disappointed and the other that he was sumptuously rewarded? The colophon above quoted expressly tells us that the Chera king concealed his gifts; he apparently entertained the poet for a long time and suddenly left him in the lurch so that he may discover the extent of his secret benefaction. What was once a hovel in a far from prosperous village became a princely mansion in a well-guarded little town full of treasures of various kinds.

In the Pura-nanuru, the Chera king who sent away the poet without even a kind word, is called Cheraman Kudakko-Cheral-Irumporai. This Irumporai was evidently the junior of the two kings bearing the names Perum-Cheral Irumporai and Ilam-Cheral Irumporai. For, only the latter has been praised by the poet in the ninth section of the Patirruppattu. It was this monarch who thus elicited endless praise, whose shoulders attracted more and more praise as Perum-Kunrur-Kilar went on singing.

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6 (பெருங்குன்றூர்கிழார்) பாடிப்பெற்ற பரிசில்; மருளில்லார்க்கு மருளக் கொடுக்கவென்று உவகையின் முப்பத்திராயிரம் காணம் கொடுத்து அவர் அறியாமை ஊரும் மனையும் வளமிகப்படைத்து ஏரும் இன்பமும் இயல்வரப்பரப்பி எண்ணற்கு ஆகா அருங்கலவெறுக்கையொடு பன்னூறாயிரம் பாற்பட வகுத்துக் காப்புமறம் தான விட்டான அக்கோ,

ERRATA

Page	*Line*	*For*	*Read*
2	18	en-Tamil	Sen-Tamil
8	14	Malvinadu:	Malainadu:
21	17	7744	774
22	30	அவைகம்	அவையகம்
29	9	reference	references
,,	29	ஒகத்தூர்	ஒகந்தூர்
34	26	ஞவ	ஙவ
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